



# इहानलपरेढ

A Cultural Journal



*T. Brinda ( 1912 - 1996 )*



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IN FOCUS

In that half-state between sleep and wakefulness, seemingly innocuous facts in one aspect of life sometimes tend to pop up in the mind, drawing up parallels in another life aspect. As food and music are two favourite predilections of yours truly, parallels between the two become inevitable; as for instance, a man's progression from a childhood preference for sweets, to appreciation of other tastes like sourness, pungency and bitterness and the delicate balance between them in every dish - when compared to his progression from film or popular music, to light classical music, to classical kritis, then manodharma, and then further on to more subtle nuances whether they are effected in compositions or in manodharma. The rewards of such a journey, for the persistent traveler, are indeed precious - T.Brinda's music, that synonym for beauty and elegance, is one such precious reward.

To commemorate this rare musician's centenary, Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan, Kalyani Sharma and Nagalakshmy Lakshmanan share memories of their tutelage under her, while Savita Narasimhan elaborates a little bit on the musical forms, padams and javalis that were this musician's forte.

A function organized by Mumbai-based disciples of T.Brinda to commemorate her centenary, featured verbal and musical tributes offered by them along with their disciples in turn, Nalini Dinesh reports.

An obituary that slipped by us in the last quarter is that of a path-breaking tabla vaadika Dr. Aban E. Mistry, Jyothi Mohan pays tribute.

Dr. M.A. Bhageerathi introduces the 12 Tirumurais in ancient Tamil literature and in particular the 12<sup>th</sup> Tirumurai (the Periapuranam written by Saykilar), to prepare the ground for delving into the musical references found in the same. Tirumurai is a compendium of songs or hymns in praise of Shiva in the Tamil language written by various poets in South India from 6th century to 11th century. The first seven volumes written by Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar were compiled by Nambi Andar Nambi as Tevaram during the 12th century. Tirumurai along with Vedas and Saiva agamas form the basis of Saiva Siddantha philosophy in Tamil Nadu (*courtesy Wikipedia*).

Yet another proof of the remarkable wonders in ancient Indian culture and heritage that lie waiting to be discovered is the fine art of Kalam Paattu, practised in Kerala. It is also a perfect example of the beauty and impermanence of life. Read on to find out why.

As the season of music and dance slowly draws to a close in The Music Academy, Chennai, P.P. Ramachandran reviews a biography of this premier institution written by V. Sriram and Malathi Rangaswami.

Nalini Dinesh and Jyothi Mohan report on events of the last quarter at the Sabha and Vidyalaya.

## Reminiscences of Brindamma

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan



T. Brinda

Growing up in Delhi in the post-independence years, I was taken almost every weekend, to sit through a live music concert by some stalwart musician from the south visiting the capital. Sometimes it was Sangeeta Kalanidhi Musiri Subramanya Iyer, or GNB, (who both taught me years later), MS, Vasanthakokilam, Madurai Mani Iyer, MLV (then an up-and-coming 'star') or the Alathur Brothers. I was, at that tender age, a very reluctant listener, but had no choice; even during school examinations time, my parents insisted that I sit through a live performance, because "kezhvi-gnanam" - what one learns from listening - was, in their opinion, as important as lessons from a teacher. And live concerts in those days were never less than four hours.

It was during those years of compulsory initiation that I was taken to a concert by the T.Brinda-T.Mukta sisters. MS with her reputation as a film actress, her shaped eyebrows and corkscrew curls dangling around her ears, the child in me found glamorous; so was MLV with her lipstick and make-up. Brinda and Mukta were anything but. The slow pace of their padams sounded ponderous, for a youngster who was fascinated by GNB's vocal pyrotechnics. Her sister Abhiramasundari (who died prematurely) accompanied on the violin in that Delhi concert.

It was only a decade later, when I got lessons from Brindamma and tried to reproduce what she taught, that my eyes opened up to the exquisite aesthetics and artistry of her style. I can still remember sitting before her, as a teenager, soaking in the phrases of alapana she so effortlessly produced, which were far more exciting than the fast-paced brika-s that was all the rage during those years of fifty years ago.

Looking back on my interactions with the leading female singers of those years (MS, MLV, DKP) I recall how they were extolled for their "humility"; not so Brindamma. I do not say this in any pejorative sense, only that she had no false sense of self-effacement, and could be sharp in her witty retorts, even acerbic, when she wanted to put people firmly in their place. Oh, she was a past master at the double entendre.... and she would thrust the rapier with a benign smile too, when she wanted to make fun of some pompous contemporary. Unlike MLV or DKP, she was frail, and yet, we students were scared of her. I, as the youngest among those she was teaching at that time, was always thrust forward by the rest, to sit next to her and take charge of the tambura in class.

With most of the stalwarts of those years, brevity was the essence of stature. Brindamma could demolish us with just a phrase, nay even just an eloquent glance that could pierce sharper than a rebuke. At times, when we did not get a phrase right (especially during the padam lessons) a wry small smile was all that she needed to express what she thought of our effort. Her sister Mukta, was, as far as my personal experience showed, more amenable and approachable, less intimidating but my interactions with Mukamma were infrequent.

Brindamma taught us Kshetragna padams, but made it clear that she wouldn't have if the college syllabus had not decreed it. She also taught other compositions - Tyagaraja's *Kripa joochutaku*, *Mariyada gaadayya* (Bhairavam), *Sukhi evvaro* (Kaanada), *Ekkaalaththilum* (Poovikalyani, a rarely heard kriti), *Inkevarunnaaru* (Sahana), *Nee muddumomu joopave* (Kamalamanohari), *Maanamu ledaa* (Hameerkalyani), *Aparadhamulanniyu* (Latangi), *Bhajana parula* (Surati) and many more, plus javali-s (*Idineeku*, in Begada, for example, which is rarely heard). Sometimes she took up kalpana swarams, but it was her impromptu phrases of alapana that left one breathless with awe and admiration. She could traverse the low notes in the mandra sthayi with ease, and that was a lesson in the beauties of this octave which one usually avoided in favour of the taara-sthayi (going up to the gandhara or touching the upper panchama was and is, a fashion, rather than exploring the aesthetics of the lower notes). Those who have heard her sing the Sahana padam *Moratopu* will know what I mean - it was difficult not to sway involuntarily to the

beauty of the music when she touched the lower madhyama at the end of each section. Just to recall that phrase, half a century later, is still to experience that melodic thrill once more.

MS had come to attend some function at our college and some of us students were talking to her. "Is Brindamma teaching you? Then you should try to learn the Sahana padam *Moratopu* if possible," she suggested, and I still remember that occasion, after five decades, although at that time I had no idea what that padam was, till it was my good fortune to learn that composition a year later. That padam is a synonym for repose. But for Brindamma and her sister Mukta, priceless padams like this one and many others (*Rama rama*, in Bhairavi, *Upamu gaane* in Yadukula Kambhoji) would have been lost for our generation. When the duo sang compositions in Paraj (*Smara sundaranguni*) or Goulipantu, they added alien notes (madhyama) that truly defied analysis or quantifying. I wonder if their music employed perhaps not just 22 but 32 shruti-s.

What was it that distinguished her music and lent it a mesmerizing dimension despite the lack of 'fireworks' or theatricals? As I look back, I can identify some unique elements that set her music apart from others - it was the deceptive quality of her renderings. They sounded easy, and looked as if there was nothing to it, but boy, try reproducing the phrase, and one became aware of the nebulous and unquantifiable "something" that was harder to reproduce than super-fast brika-s. The voice needed to be drawn into a fine, thin, silvery strand to be woven in and out like creating a filigreed work of art. The north Indian may call it "meend" but it was more than that. There were intricate and delicate, brika-s too, short loops that defied codification and for that very reason, dazzled. No wonder she smiled amusedly when we tried to write down the Sahana padam in notation in class. Her phrases could often not be reduced to notation.

The voice was not even full-throated, and yet it swayed the listener and drew admiration, like intricate lines in an impressionist painting. Impressionist? Why am I reaching for a foreign simile, when I am trying to describe a quintessentially Indian, Carnatic rendering? That's the problem - she defied descriptions. If music is to be felt and soaked in, rather than described, hers was it.

She did not believe in elaborate alapana-s, it was mostly line sketches delineating the essence of the raga. One of the anecdotes I like to recall is about her explanation for the elaborate alapana-s that nayanam artistes specialise in - "They have to play while the deity is taken round the four main streets during temple festivities, so they have to make their repertoire last for hours, till the procession is finished", she said. Sounds like a very plausible explanation for the nayanam style! Her kalpana swarams were likewise brief, never dragged ponderously to end in elaborate muktayippu patterns. Her forte was "rasa", and in that she had no peers.

The sisters often sang simultaneously the swara-s and sahitya for kriti-s like Shyama Shastri's *Marivere gati* (Anandabhairavi) at the end of the anupallavi. Try it - it can be hard and distracting but they specialised in it. She also had great belief in the curative powers of the Navagraha kriti-s of Dikshitar.

Recently, someone who knew Brindamma recalled a comment that she had made - "Sakuntala is one of the few who were able to reproduce my style", she is reported to have said, and this comment was gleefully carried back to me by a young aficionado of Carnatic music who was learning from me. It was the ultimate compliment anyone could wish for. We can reproduce her style, but not her music. Therein lies the greatness of an artiste.

*Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan is a Bangalore-based journalist, author, musician and consumer rights activist.*

## My Memories of Brindamma

Kalyani Sharma



*Brindamma (centre) with disciples Kalyani Sharma (left) Alamelu Mani*

Brindamma, as we all fondly called her, reigned supreme as Sampradaya Sangeeta Chakravartini. She was a traditionalist to the core, who stood resolutely by her musical values. She never played to the gallery – never sacrificed the quality or purity of Carnatic music in order to please the audience. She always strived to elevate Carnatic music to a higher level. She was a superlative and incomparable exponent of padams and javalis. Such was her command over this genre that padams and javalis became synonymous with Brindamma. As her disciple, I had the good fortune to imbibe this treasure trove of music while learning padams and javalis from her. It was a memorable experience. I now share some of those golden moments, as my Shradhanjali to Brindamma, on the occasion of her birth centenary.

### A dream come true

Right from my childhood days, I had harboured a fascination for Brindamma and her soul-stirring music. I had the good fortune of meeting her personally in 1956-57. At that time, I was just a novice, an ardent student of the Vidwan course at Swati Tirunal Academy, Trivandrum. My respected Guru Shree Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, who was heading the institution then, used to invite renowned musicians to perform at the college in order to expose students to superior music. Brindamma and Muktamma's concert was thus arranged and I experienced the magic of their live concert for the first time. As I listened spellbound, an ardent aspiration consumed my consciousness. How I longed to learn just one or two kritis directly from them! However, this was all in the realm of impossibility. It was an acknowledged fact that in those days, Brindamma and Muktamma only imparted musical knowledge to distinguished musicians who were adepts in their own right. Deeply loyal to the music they had imbibed from their Gurus, they required their disciples to attain a certain level of musical maturity (gyanam) and were reluctant to impart training to a neophyte, for fear of the compositions being distorted or tainted. Only renowned musicians had the privilege of learning from them.

Learning pure music was my vocation and I continued to sincerely learn and train under my God-like Gurus at Swati Tirunal Academy. My fledgling dream of learning from Brindamma and Muktamma was realized nearly 15 years later in 1971 and I became one of the few privileged students they deigned to teach. I learnt first from Muktamma and soon after, from Brindamma. I have been an ardent disciple of Brindamma ever since. Whenever she visited Mumbai, a teaching session (now popularly called 'workshop') became inevitable.

### Exquisite music

Brinda is yet another name for Tulasi, which as we all know has its own special fragrance and intrinsic virtues. So did Brindamma's music. Like the biting quality of Tulasi juice, her exquisite music had a way of arresting the listeners and capturing their hearts. Brindavanam also means a garden with an array of trees with flowers of myriad hues and fragrances. Similarly Brindamma's music had a variety of characteristics - shruti shuddham, ragabhava, sahityabhava, swara and laya gnanam, inspired and innovative interpretations – all presented in a soothing well-modulated

voice with gentleness, pliability, clarity and depth. One was transported to a sublime plane. This is what made her music magical.

She had her own ethereally beautiful style of rendering kritis interwoven with sangatis and gamakas with subtle nuances, it was astounding. Her sensitive way of handling the padams with bhava, raga and tala made one appreciate that she was the Bhava Raga Tala Mohini portrayed by Dikshitar in his Kalyani Raga kriti *Bhajare re chittha Balambikaam*. She effortlessly and fluently rendered major padams commencing at different eduppus set to Mishra Jampa and Ata Talas, exhibiting her mastery of laya.

Brindamma had created a niche for herself in the realm of Carnatic music. Those rasikas with true knowledge of pristine pure music gained true enjoyment from her music. She demanded an elevated level of musical maturity from her audience. A certain degree of gnanam was required simply to enjoy her music.... imagine then the perfection required to learn under the legendary Brindamma.

### **Guru par excellence**

Brindamma never looked at the clock while teaching. Though she disliked notating compositions and learning from a book or a cassette, she gracefully permitted us to make notes. "These days you are learning music amidst several other commitments. So you better write them down as otherwise you may forget them" she used to remark teasingly. She, personally never referred to any material. Her mind was her book.

Once when I showed her the notation of some of her padams which I had prepared, she was very pleased. But at the same time she pointed out its limitations. "It is very difficult to notate padams and you have done a good job. But if you sing like this will the padam emerge in its beautiful form?" she queried with her typical smile.

In 1976 Brindamma was conferred the Sangeetha Kalanidhi title by the Music Academy, Chennai. At the felicitation function organised on the occasion by Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai, four senior disciples from Mumbai, including myself, were invited to present padams and javalis. None of us were novices. We were also shishyas of renowned Gurus and senior performing artistes with years of teaching experience. Yet we had to undergo rigorous practice daily for two months before the performance. Brindamma came to Mumbai especially to teach us the padams and javalis and put us through regular practice sessions. Such was Brindamma's passion for perfection and she was unrelenting in the learning process. She never believed in learning a composition in one day and presenting it the next day on stage.

Little wonder our performance at Krishna Gana Sabha was a big success. Learning from such a great personality was a lesson in character-building. Both the learning process and the programme was a memorable experience for me, as we also had the privilege of rendering the padams and javalis amidst a gathering of renowned Vidwans including my Guru Shree Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and of course Brindamma and Muktamma.

Despite her immense musical knowledge and achievements, Brindamma was a simple down-to-earth person. She was a great human being with profound commitment, strength and character. She never criticised any musician. At the same time she never failed to shower appreciation on those who deserved it. She had set her own values, both personal and musical and stood by them till the end. She has left behind a pure and untainted musical tradition for the generations to follow. It is our sacred responsibility, as her disciples, to follow her path, persevere and preserve the sanctity and purity of the one thing she intensely cherished and protected - her music.

*Kalyani Sharma is a Mumbai-based senior Carnatic musician and guru*

## Brindamma, My Dear Guru

Nagalakshmy Lakshmanan



T. Brinda

It was with awe and trepidation that I first entered the presence of Brindamma, when my parents took me to her home in Adyar, some forty years ago. "Awe" because she was my icon and her music used to mesmerize me even at a young age. I had learnt music mainly in the Semmangudi style and for a short while from Shree D. K. Jayaraman, but this one longing had always been within me – to learn from Brindamma. "Trepidation" because I had heard from many quarters that she did not teach anybody and everybody, but only a chosen few approved by her, who could get a hang of her style. Another major deterrent was the hearsay that "caustic remarks" and "harsh snubs" were her way of dealing with people.

Years rolled by and my chance came quite out of the blue! I got a call from my icon herself, asking me if I was interested in learning from her! I grabbed the offer tightly with both hands, and found myself in her presence once again. Only this time, much to my delight mixed with a lot of initial fear, as her student! The teaching started about a week after that meeting. And it did not take much time for my fears to desert me without a trace.

As I attended class after class, quite contrary to the image of her and other members of the Dhanamma School, there she was, all love, kindness, patience and softness. Indeed, all the traits that one would love to see in an adorable teacher, found a place in her. Actually, she was so indulgent in my case that she wouldn't say even one harsh word even when I went to class without doing my homework (which was the case most of the time). She would, on occasion, just tenderly chide me for not practising, and would then patiently teach me again before proceeding.

When I found any nuance or unique way of rendition difficult, she never tired of teaching me the phrases over and over again until she deemed that I had got it right. At any rate, there was never a word of exasperation or reprimand. The opinions circulating about Brindamma's "stern façade", "brusque manner" and "unkind comments" were, I realized, just the baseless ramblings of an unfortunate few who knew her not.

Though she had perfect mastery of both theory and rendition, Brindamma's was an unquestioning dedication to her musical tradition. That was a great lesson in itself. When there were some unique, 'unusual' prayogams suggestive of another raga finding its way into the keertanam, varnam, javali or padam, mesmerized by her beautiful rendition, I never quite felt like asking her, "Why such a prayogam, Amma?" On a few occasions, though, I would just look up into her face, flummoxed at how such a prayogam could have found its way into that particular song. Understanding the look in my eyes, she would promptly and simply say, "அது அப்படித்தான். தனம்மா அப்படித்தான் பாடுவா. நாயனா பிள்ளை அப்படித்தான் சொல்லியிருக்கார்." At any rate, those prayogams had such unrivalled exquisiteness that none would bother to question their theoretical correctness, least of all Brindamma who had such a natural mastery over the aesthetics of rendition.

Her affection knew no bounds. It is impossible to forget how she loved me like a daughter, nay, a child. Believe it or not, on a few occasions, when I was extremely tired because of the other demands of the day, I have even dozed off in class! I wonder if anyone would have ever dared do that in Brindamma's class when the teaching was one to one! She would just reach out with her hand and touch me to bring me back to earth and say, "என்னம்மா இது? தூக்கம் போதாது. உடம்பில த்ராணியுமில்லை. கண்ண தூடச்சிண்டு வா", in an ever so soft and loving manner. Stalwarts of her mettle would perhaps have felt insulted or angered by such behavior on the part of a disciple. But Brindamma's was only an outpouring of concern. Who can be like her!



Sometimes, I have even told her directly, "Brindamma, எனக்கு இந்த ப்ரயோகம் வராது. அதுனால் இதை விட்டுவிடலாம்." She would just dismiss it with, "இப்படி சொன்னா என்ன பண்ணறது! எல்லாம் வரும்." Touched by the overwhelming kindness, tears would have started rolling down my cheek by then. She would softly ask me to go, wash my face and come back, only to teach me the same prayogam. She wouldn't let me go till I mastered it!

She used to make me sing raga alapana in class once in a while and also during the numerous occasions such as radio programmes when I have had the privilege of providing her vocal support. She never interfered in the way I developed the raga. If I adopted any of her school's phrases and did it neatly, or if the overall raga delineation was to her satisfaction she would utter a "Hmm" of appreciation. And if I adopted an approach totally different from her style, then there would be no comments! When I used to sing a raga or swara during the All India Radio concerts that I sang along with her, with prayogams and swara combinations in her 'bani', her exchange of glances with and smiles of approval to the accompanying artistes would be sufficient to transport me to seventh heaven!

Brindamma's repertoire, needless to say was vast as the ocean. But never has she ever resorted to writing down the words of songs or their notation. Once she learnt the song, it stayed in her memory forever. Even when she was past 80, there was never an occasion when she had to 'refer' any written script, though I used to do it all the time, much to her chagrin! That vast ocean was all tucked away inside her.

I had the great good fortune of being Brindamma's disciple. That she chose to teach me, that I could move so closely with her, that I was the recipient of her great love and care and that she made me accompany her in her concerts are all the rarest of blessings, which I will ever cherish. To me, in more ways than one, there never was, is or will be another Brindamma.

*Nagalakshmy Lakshmanan is a disciple of T.Brinda*

## OBITUARY



Pandit Ravi Shankar

Legendary musician Pandit Ravi Shankar passed away in San Diego, California on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2012. He was 92.

Born in Varanasi and trained by illustrious guru Baba Allaudin Khan, Ravi Shankar was India's most esteemed musical ambassador and a singular phenomenon in the classical music worlds of East and West as a performer, composer and teacher.

Ravi Shankar was an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a member of the United Nations International Rostrum of composers.

One of Ravi Shankar's humanitarian efforts was the Concert for Bangla Desh with George Harrison, a fund-raiser for Bangladesh refugees in 1971.

In 1986 Ravi Shankar was nominated as a member of the Rajya Sabha, India's upper house of Parliament.

He has received many awards and honours from India and from all over the world, including fourteen doctorates, the Bharat Ratna, the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, the Music Council UNESCO award, the Magsaysay Award from Manila, two Grammy awards, the Fukuoka Grand Prize from Japan, the Polar Music Prize, to name some.

## PADAM and JAVALI- vanishing elegance

Savita Narasimhan

Padams and javalis are two of the most fascinating musical forms in Carnatic music. Both conjure up a variety of moods that include romance, devotion, humor and at times sarcasm and even angst. Both have fascinated seasoned musicians and listeners for a long time. However, in current times, these compositions are fast joining the list of endangered species.

**Padam:** During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, in the far south, the padam developed as part of the repertoire of cultured courtesans associated with temples and royal courts. An offshoot of the bhakti cult, its original home was the temple and its zealous custodian, the 'devadasi'. These poems are examples of *antar-bhakti-bahir shringara* (devotion through the medium of romance). They are addressed to a god who appears in the guise of the courtesan's patron or lover, and they describe in powerful and inventive ways the complex relationship between these two figures – the woman/devotee and her lover/deity. Evocative in appeal and demonstrative in expression, these poems are hymnal in spirit. No wonder then, that the poet reads poetry in them, the musician hears music, the dancer sees the dance and the devotee senses the essence of bhakti.

**Composers:** Even though the works of people such as Jayadeva are similar in theme, structurally they differ from the padam as composed by Kshetragna, who is revered as the father of this form. Kshetragna was the most versatile and central of Telugu padam poets, who energized the vision and idiom of generations of artistes with his elegant and euphonic padam-s. He specialized in madhura-bhakti and his works were much relished by sophisticated and cultured courtesans who performed before kings. Others like Sarangapani, Ghanam Krishnaiyar and Vaideeshwarankoil Subbaramaiyar endeavored to follow in the footsteps of Kshetragna.

**Exponents:** With the abolition of the devadasi system by the British in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, padam-s gradually made their way to the concert platform. There are different schools that have imparted their own distinct styles to the rendering of padam-s but it is generally accepted that Veena Dhanammal took this form to its height of musicality. She was a legendary musician cherished for her rich heritage in the fine arts, and more so for her accent on sophisticated, highly embellished, bhava-laden music. Though her exhaustive repertoire included masterpieces of Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Shyama Shastri, Subbaraya Shastri, Veena Kuppaiayyer, Tiruvotriyur Tyagaiyyer, Patnam Subramania Iyer and a host of other pieces gathered from impeccable sources, padam-s and javali-s were considered to be her forte. The principal source of her repertory was Balakrishna Das of Wallajapet, also called 'Padam' Baldas. Dhanammal brought stature to padam-s by imparting a sophistication and fineness hitherto unheard of in that genre.

Her renditions inspired greats of the next generation such as Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Gottuvadyam Narayana Iyengar and Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer to learn various masterpieces from her. Her daughters Lakshmiratnam, Jayammal and grandchildren T. Balasaraswati, T. Vishwanathan and T. Sankaran carried on the legacy of padam-s in their music and dance recitals.

Nevertheless, her granddaughter Sangeetha Kalanidhi T. Brinda was undoubtedly the most unparalleled repository of padam-s and javali-s that Carnatic music has ever seen. Brinda's exposition of padam-s carried a perpetual freshness and inimitable individuality, thanks to her magical voice that was as ductile as it was malleable. Brinda's voice could do full justice to the rigorous demands of this musical form.

Padam-s require a voice that can negotiate super-slow to super-fast phrases, plain as well as oscillated notes with depth in the lower octaves and sharpness in the higher regions, a deep as

well as mellow tone, superior breath control and an ability to modulate it with perception rather than technical versatility. Consequently, the demands on a student of this form are high – in terms of voice modulation, breath control, vocal continuity, depth and clarity in expressing the numerous subtleties of melody. Brinda possessed all these in abundance and her renditions awed almost every musician of her era. To quote Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, 'It was our general consensus that if it were possible to render even one song like Brinda, our lives would be worthwhile'. Semmangudi could speak from personal experience, having learnt from Brinda herself as did M.S. Subbulakshmi, Ramnad Krishnan, Chitravina Ravikiran and scores of others.

Padam-s demand almost as much from the listener as from the musician. In melodic sophistication alone, they arguably excel all other genres of classical music. Most padam-s have been set in a deliberate slow tempo to meet the demands of bhava and rasa.

Javali-s, a product of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are lighter in mood and expression, with a characteristic lilt and gait. Some of the more popular ones include *Nee matale* (Poorvikalyani), *Marubari* (Khamas), *Sakhi prana* (Chenjurutu), *Saramaina* (Behag), *Smara sundaranguni* (Paras) and so on. Dharmapuri Subbarayar, Patnam Subramania Iyer, Tirupanandal Pattabhiramayya and Tirupati Narayanaswamy were some of the popular javalikarta-s. Many of the javali-s have been composed in traditional ragas, usually rendered in medium tempo, with the lyrics conveying sentiments of light romance.

I have had the opportunity to learn some of these masterpieces from my mentor Chitravina Ravikiran and Smt A. R. Sundaram, both direct disciples of T. Brinda, and never cease to be amazed by the sheer beauty and individuality of the raga-s employed in these compositions. The serene beauty of the charanam in the Begada padam *Yala padare*, the subtlety of Bhairavi in *Rama Rama*, the unique treatment of Sahana in *Moratopu* or the compelling mood of anguish in the Punnagavarali padam *Ninnu joochi* are some of the many examples of the ultimate melodic refinement in Carnatic music.

Sadly, this musical form is fast disappearing from the concert circuit, and there is every danger of its getting closeted in a few obscure recordings and in the memories of yesteryear listeners. Our music is the poorer for this neglect of one of its most delicate and beautiful strands. It is now up to every conscientious musician to make a sincere effort to learn this from authentic sources, revive this art form and restore its full glory.

*Savita Narasimhan is a Carnatic vocalist, painter and writer based in Chennai*



## BHAJANA MAHOTSAV



A festival of devotional music will be held from 24<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> January 2013 culminating in Tyagaraja Aradhana on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013. The festival will feature Chattisgarh and Rajkot folk bhajans by Anuradha Sriram, devotional music by O.S. Arun and party, Vishakha Hari's sangeeta upanyasam-s 'Rama Nama Prabhavam' and 'Shree Guruvayurappan Leelai' and namasankeertanam by Udayalur K. Kalyanaraman.

## T.Brinda Centenary Celebration by Disciples

Nalini Dinesh



T. Brinda

T. Brinda's centenary was observed with great reverence by her disciples in Mumbai— all veteran musicians who have carved a niche for themselves in the music field – Smt. Alamelu Mani, Smt. Kalyani Sharma and Smt. Radha Namboodiri - on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2012. They were joined in their efforts by veteran dance guru Shree Kalyanasundaram who had also interacted with Brindamma and been influenced by the aesthetics of her music.

The evening began with excerpts from a film on Brindamma produced by Shree R.K. Ramanathan and marketed by Swathi Sanskriti series with creative direction by S.B. Kanthan. Apart from the many soul-stirring recordings of Brindamma's renditions and opinions from all those who had come under the influence of her style, it was a bonus to see Brindamma herself talk about the early days of her training, both under her mother Kamakshi Ammal and during her gurukula vasam with Kanchipuram Naina Pillai. 14-15 hours of daily practice used to be the norm with akaara sadhakam starting from 4:00 a.m. in all the major ragas in 3 speeds. She also recalled attending the Friday evening musical soirees at her grandmother Veena Dhanammal's house which was attended by all the musical greats of the day. Dhanammal would play for exactly 2 hours 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The hour of eight would be sounded by the "gundu" in those days at which her grandmother would promptly put down her veena and then ask her granddaughter to sing songs like *Manasu swadheena* and *Maragatamani*. On occasion the grandmother would also play along on the veena with the granddaughter on hearing something good that the child had learnt from Naina Pillai.

Brindamma's daughter Vegavahini, in her talk in the film, recalled that her mother's training under Naina Pillai was intensive, one kriti in the morning and one kriti in the evening were taught daily. Interestingly, Naina Pillai had specified that Brinda should stick to rendering graceful compositions rather than venture into RTP, since the former is more "feminine". About her mother's initial break in the music field, she recounted that Ramaniya Chettyiar, a connoisseur of music in Madras, recommended Brindamma for performing at the Jagannatha Bhakta Sabha.

The three disciples then reminisced on their illustrious guru.

Smt. Alamelu Mani recalled that she learnt from Brindamma for more than three decades and her learning was not limited to Brindamma's exquisite and extensive repertoire of kritis, padams and javalis but also included valuable aspects of singing.

Smt. Kalyani Sharma compared her guru's music to Tulasi's purity. It required gyanam just to understand her music let alone trying to reproduce it. Her other guru Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer had great regard for Brindamma's music and would urge his students to listen and learn from it. She was a patient and meticulous teacher who made her disciples put in intense practice for programmes that she presented them in.

Smt. Radha Namboodiri stated that Brindamma had opened up a whole new world of beauty and aesthetics for her, though she didn't understand it at the time. She learnt beautiful pieces from Brindamma starting with the Varaali varnam, *Biraana Brova Ide*(Kalyani) – for which she won the AIR competition prize, *Amba Kamakshi* (Bhairavi), *Bhajana Parula* (Surati) and many others. One of her key learnings from Brindamma's music was how to handle every swara in a raga be it, Kalyani, Pantuvarali or Mohanam.

Guru Kalyanasundaram recalled with gratitude Brindamma's graciousness in allowing him to record her padam renditions and her invitation for him to perform at the Music Academy the year that she was awarded the Sangeetha Kalanidhi.

Next on the agenda were performances by disciples of Alamelu Mani, Kalyani Sharma, Radha Namboodiri and Kalyanasundaram.



Students of Smt. Alamelu Mani with Rohit Prasad (mridangam) and Prema Sundaresan (violin)

Dr. Gita Durai, Aparna Natarajan, Purnima, Bala Swaminathan, Padmini Iyer and Ramkumar, disciples of Alamelu Mani, rendered *Tulasidala* (Mayamalavagowla), *Vadiga gopaluni* (Mohanam padam of Kshetragna) and *Appudu manasu* (Khamas javali of Patnam Subramahia Iyer).



Students of Smt. Kalyani Sharma with Rohit Prasad (mridangam) and Vanamala Dixit (violin)

Kalyani Sharma's disciples Hemamalini Arun, Kanakavalli Santhanam, Sunitha Ganesh and Kartik Iyer, rendered *Kamakshi* (Tiruvarur Ramaswami Pillai kriti in Vasanta), *Baamaro* (Kedaragowla padam of Kshetragna) and *Elaradayane* (Bhairavi javali by Chinnaiah).



Smt. Radha Namboodiri (middle) with students and Rohit Prasad (mridangam) and Vanamala Dixit (violin)

Radha Namboodiri along with her disciples Dharini, Gayathry, Nalini, Praveena, Rajeshwari and Suja, rendered *Emanadicchevo* (Tyagaraja kriti in Sahana), *Valapudasa* (Varaali padam of Kshetragna) and *Vagaladi* (Behag javali by Tirupati Narayanaswami).



*Rohit Prasad (mridangam), Smt. Kalyani Sharma, Smt. Alamelu Mani, Vanamala Dixit (violin)*

Alamelu Mani and Kalyani Sharma then rendered *Niddirayil* (Pantuvaraali padam by Ghanam Krishna Iyer), *Talachukonte* (Kurinji padam by Ghattupallavaru) and a javali by Pattabiramayya in Bilahari *Paaripovalaraa*.

Guru Kalyanasundaram's granddaughters and disciples Shruti and Shivakami danced to *Shree Ganapatini* (Tyagaraja kriti in Sowrashtra), *Tiruvotriyur Tyagarajar* (Athana padam) and concluded with a tillana in Poornachandrika.

The programmes were followed by a sumptuous dinner.

## Dr. Aban E. Mistry

Jyothi Mohan



Dr. Aban E. Mistry

Dr. Aban E. Mistry, who dedicated her life and all her energy to the cause of classical music passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at Mumbai. A worthy shishya of Pandit Keki S. Jijina, Pandit Laxmanrao Bodas and noted tabla exponent Ustad Amir Hussain Khan, Dr. Aban Mistry was India's first professional lady tabla player who made a name for herself in India and overseas. She is listed in the Limca Book of Records for the distinction of being the first lady solo tabla *vaadika*.

She had her debut as a vocalist at the tender age of four with initial training from her aunt, late Mehroo Workingboxwala followed by further training from Pt. Laxmanrao Bodas for a period of three decades. Dr. Aban also studied Kathak which she had to abandon due to health reasons. Simultaneously, she came under the influence of Guru Pt. Keki S. Jijina who taught her sitar in which she did her Sangeet Visharad, securing first position. He also gave her a strong foundation in tabla-playing.

By her seventeenth year she was an accomplished vocalist, sitar as well as tabla *vaadika*. The depth of her talent so captivated the legendary tabla stalwart, Ustad Amir Hussain Khan, that he took her under his wings and groomed her to perfection. She infused in her style, the creative aspects of all four gharanas, Delhi, Faroukhabad, Azarada and Lucknow to evolve her own distinctive style. She also mastered the concept and techniques of pakhawaj from the illustrious pakhawaji, Pt. Narayanrao Mangal Vedhekar. She was conferred a doctorate degree, Sangeet Acharya, in Music by the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalay, Bombay for her research volume 'Tabla aur Pakhawaj ke Gharane evam Paramparaye', under the guidance of the eminent musicologist, Prof. V. R. Athavale. It is an exhaustive compilation of the unique history of tabla and pakhawaj. It includes 30 artistes, dating back to 500 years and incorporates the historical evolution, techniques and styles of all the gharanas and paramparas of percussion instruments along with their traditional *bandishes*. This research volume has become a reference book on the subject in various universities all over India. This research volume also includes her sensational discovery that rocked the Indian classical music world, disproving the centuries-held belief that the tabla was brought to India from Persia by Amir Khusrau. A stone mural in a dusty rock cave in Bhaja, Western Maharashtra, dating back to 2300 years, depicted a woman playing an instrument similar to the tabla. Abanji was also a Sangeet Alankar and Pravin in vocal, from the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalay, Miraj.

A renowned musicologist, respected lecturer and a brilliant research scholar, Abanji was affiliated with several universities, evaluating as well as guiding students for PhD and serving on juries of several institutions. 'Tabla aur Pakhawaj ke Gharane evam Paramparaye' in English as well as Hindi, 'Tabla ki Bandishein' which is a compilation of rare *bandishes* and 'The Parsis and Indian Classical Music-An Unsung Contribution' were authored by her. These and several research tomes have been printed several times and are of immense help to students of tabla as well as artistes. Her articles and newspaper columns stand testimony to her contribution to the cause of classical music. She gave lecture-demonstrations and conducted workshops all over the country. She was awarded the Sahitya Ratna in Hindi and Sanskrit and her work has been detailed and documented in 'Daughters of Maharashtra' and 'Eminent Parsis of India'.

She performed widely both in India and abroad at major *sangeet sammelans*. She has toured Europe, the Middle East and played at the Festival of India in erstwhile Russia. Her performances received rave reviews in the press wherever she played.

She was the recipient of several titles and awards over the years including Taal Mani from Sur Singar Samsad, Charma Vadya Tabla Bhushan from the Shankeshwar Math, Taal Sringer, Sangeet Setu and Sangeet Kala Ratna from Latur. The prestigious Omkarnath Thakur Award and the Giants International Award were given to her in 2002. World Zoroastrian Organisation Award in 2002, ITC Indian Music Forum Award for Research in 2003 and several that followed recognised her expertise in the field of classical music.

Inspired by a missionary zeal and reverence for her gurus and having undergone insurmountable hurdles Dr. Aban Mistry and her guru Pt. Keki S. Jijina founded a music institution called 'Swar Sadhna Samiti' in 1961 in Mumbai, to facilitate upcoming artistes. Even today it is rendering yeoman service in the field of Indian classical music. By offering scholarships to needy but deserving young talent they are giving back to society and trying to build a healthy atmosphere for the performing arts. They recently celebrated their golden jubilee sans any gaudy pomp or show with only one goal of service to art.

With her passing on, the music world is bereft of a selfless, dedicated musician. Dr. Aban Mistry will be missed but the Samiti she has nurtured will carry forth the good work she and her guru initiated.

*Jyothi Mohan is a Bharatanatyam guru and faculty member of the Vidyalaya.*

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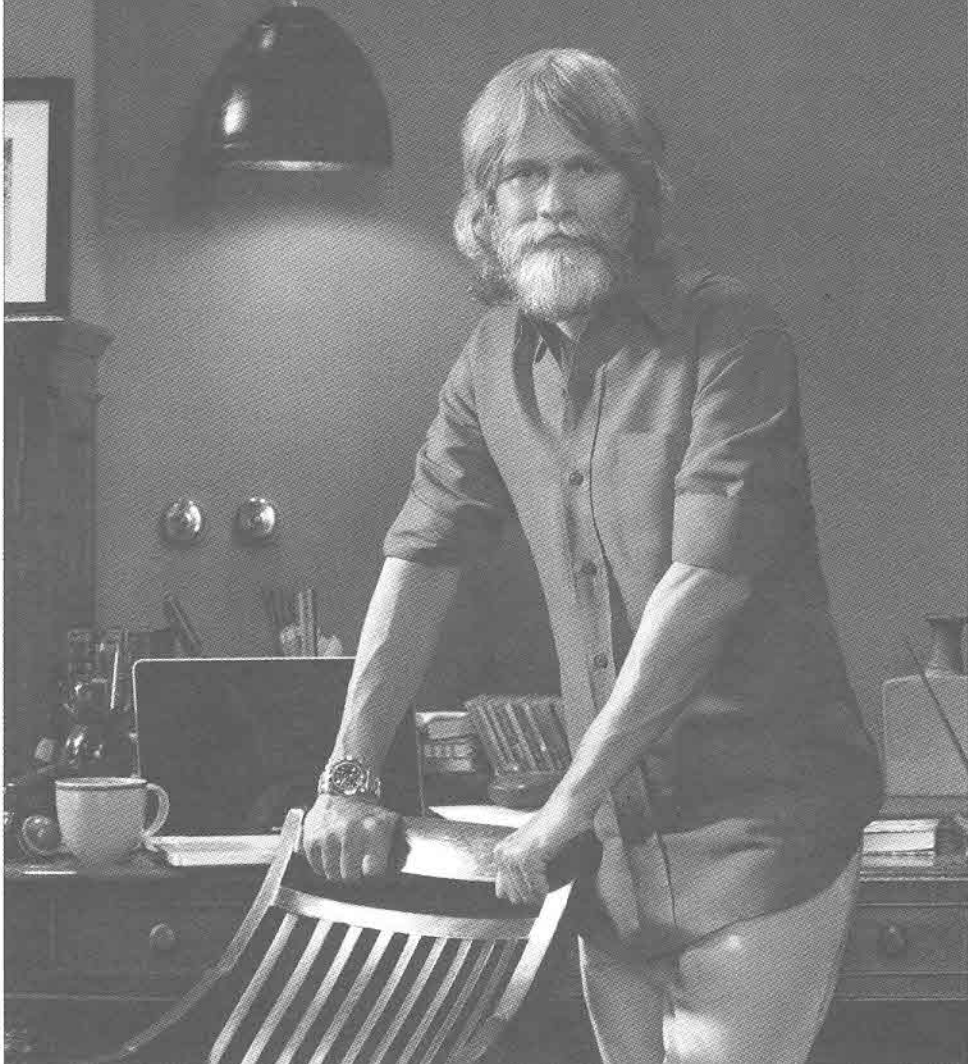
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## சேக்கிழாரும் இசைத்தமிழும்

Dr. M. A. Bhageerathi and Harini

### இயல் - I

#### முன்னுரை

தமிழில் திருமுறைகள் பன்னிரெண்டாகும். முதல் மூன்று திருமுறைகள் திருஞானசம்பந்தப் பெருமான் அருளியவை. நான்காம், ஐந்தாம், ஆறாம் நாவுக்கரசர் என்கிற அப்பர் பிரானின் அருள் வாக்காகும். ஏழாம் திருமுறை வந்தொண்டர் என அழைக்கப்படும் சுந்தரருடையது ஆகும். மாணிக்க வாசகப் பெருமான் இயற்றிய திருவாசகமும் திருக்கோவையும் எட்டாம் திருமுறையைச் சாரும். திருமாளிகைத் தேவர் உள்ளிட்ட ஒன்பதின்தாம் அருளிய திருவிசைபாவும் திருப்பல்லாண்டும் ஒன்பதாம் திருமுறையைச் சேர்ந்தவை ஆகும். திருமூலர் எழுதிய திருமந்திரம் பத்தாவது திருமுறையைச் சேர்ந்தது. திரு ஆலவாயர் உள்ளிட்ட பன்னிருவர் அருளிய நூற்பது பாடல்களைக் கொண்டது பதினோராம் திருமுறை ஆகும். சேக்கிழார் எழுதிய பெரியபுராணம் பன்னிரண்டாம் திருமுறையைச் சேர்ந்ததாகும். தமிழில் உள்ள இப்பன்னிரு திருமுறைகளும் ஒம் காரத்தின் பரிணாமம் என்றே கருதப்படுகின்றன. இவற்றில் பன்னிரெண்டாவது திருமுறையான திருத்தொண்டர் புராணத்தில் உள்ள இசைக் குறிப்புகள் ஆய்விற்கு எடுத்து கொள்ளப்பட்டுள்ளன.

தமிழ் திருமுறைகளில் பன்னிரண்டாம் திருமுறை சேக்கிழார் அருளியது. அத்திருமுறை “பெரியபுராணம்” என்றும் “திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம்” என்றும் வெவ்வேறு பெயர்களால் வழங்கப்பட்டு வருகிறது. பெரியபுராணத்திலுள்ள இசைக் குறிப்புகளைப் பற்றிய செய்திகளைப் பார்க்கும் முன் சேக்கிழார் பெருமானின் வாழ்க்கை வரலாற்றை சிறிது பார்க்கப்போம்.

**ஆசிரியர் வரலாறு:**

சென்னையை அடுத்த குன்றத்தூரில் வேளாள மரபில் சேக்கிழார் பிறந்தார். சேக்கிழார் காலத்தைப் பற்றி ஆய்வாளர்களுக்குள் கருத்து வேற்றுமை உண்டு. சிலர் பதினோராம் நூற்றாண்டின் தொடக்கம் என்றும், இன்னும் சிலர் பன்னிரண்டாம் நூற்றாண்டின் நடு என்றும் கூறுவர். ஆனால் ஆய்வாளர்கள் இதுகாறும் சேக்கிழார் காலத்தினை அறுதியிட்டுக் கூறவில்லை.

சேக்கிழார் இயற்பெயர் அருண் மொழித்தேவர். இவருக்கு பாஸாபுரையார் என்றொரு இளவலுண்டு. சேக்கிழார் இளமையிலேயே மதிநுட்பமும் நூலோடுடையவராய் விளங்கியதுடன், மிகுந்த இறை பக்தி உடையவராயும் இருந்தார். இதனால் கும்பகோணம் திருநாகேசுவரத்துப் பெருமான் மீது அளவில்லாத அன்பு பூண்டு ஒழுகி, அப்பெருமானின் நினைவாகத் தாம் பிறந்த குன்றத்தூரிலும் திருநாகேசுவரத்துப் பெருமானை வழிபடலாயினார். இவரது காலத்தில் வாழ்ந்த இரண்டாம் குலோத்துங்கச் சோழன் இவரை முதலமைச்சராக ஏற்றுக் கொண்டு இவருக்கு “உத்தமச் சோழ பல்லவர்”, என்ற பட்டம் கொடுத்து சிறப்பித்தார். இதனால் இச்சோழ அரசனை “அநபாயர்” என்று சேக்கிழார் அழைக்கின்றார். “அநபாயர்” என்று அழைக்கப்படும் குலோத்துங்கச் சோழன் சீவக சிந்தாமணியின் மீது பெரிதும் ஈடுபாடு கொண்டவர். சேக்கிழார் அவரிடம், இந்நூல்கள் யாதும் பயன்தரா என்று கூறி, ஈசன் ஒருவனே எப்பொருளையும் உருவாக்கமுடியும் என்றும், அவனை அடைவதற்குரிய நெறி சிவபெருமானையும் அவ்னுடைய அடியவர்களையும் வழிபடுதலே என்றும் அங்ஙனம் வழிபட்டு உயர்ந்தோர் பலர் என்றும், எடுத்துரைத்துச் சோழ அரசனை நெறிப்படுத்தினார்.

சுந்தரப் பெருமானின் திருத்தொண்டினையும் நம்பியாண்டார் நம்பிகளின் புகழினைப் பற்றியும் விரிவாக எடுத்துக் கூறினார். சேக்கிழாரின் கூற்றினை ஏற்ற அரசர், அவரைத் தொண்டர்களின் வரலாற்றினை எடுத்துரைக்க வேண்டும், என்று கேட்டுக் கொண்டார். மன்னரின் வேண்டுகோளுக்கு இணங்கி, தில்லைக்குச் சென்று நடராசப் பெருமானை வழிபடும் போது இறைவன் அவருக்கு “உலகெலாம்” என அடியெடுத்துக் கொடுத்தார். மேலும் சேக்கிழாரைத் தமது பாதச் சிலம்பொலியைக் கேட்கச் செய்தார். அதன் பிறகு “திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம்”, என்னும் அரிய நூல் உருவாயிற்று. இந்நூல் சுந்தரப் பெருமானைப் பாட்டுடைத் தலைவராகக் கொண்டு பாடப்பட்டுள்ளது. அவருடன் பரவையர், சங்கிலியார் பற்றிய வரலாற்றும் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது. மேலும் இந்நூல், இம்முடிவரும் கைலாயத்திலிருந்து இம்மண்ணுலகத்திற்கு வந்து அவதரித்த காரணத்தினையும், இறைவன் தடுத்தாட்க் கொண்ட வரலாற்றையும் கூறி, சுந்தரர் அருளிய திருத்தொண்டர் தொகையிலுள்ள அடியவர்களின் வரலாற்றினை, பதினோரு சருக்கங்களாக வகுத்துப் பின்னர் அவர் திருப்ப கயிலைக்கு சென்றதை இறுதியாக வைத்து, நிறைவு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது. இந்நூலினைப் பற்றி கேள்வியுற்ற அநபாயர் தில்லைக்குச் சென்று சேக்கிழாரையும் அவர் எழுதிய நூலையும்

யானை மீது ஏற்றித் தானே கவரி வீசி, தில்லை நகரில் பவனிவரச் செய்தார். இது காரணமாக சேக்கிழாருக்கு “தொண்டர் சீர் பரவ்வார்” என்ற பட்டம் கொடுக்கப்பட்டது. பிறகு சேக்கிழார் பெருமான் தில்லையிலேயே தங்கி சிவத் தொண்டு செய்து வாழ்ந்தார். பல்லாண்டுகள் ஈசனின் மலர்ச் சிலம்படியில் வாழ்ந்த சேக்கிழார், சிவானந்த ஞான வடிவாகி அண்ணலார் சேவடிக்கீழ் எழுந்தருளும் பெருவாழ்வு பெற்றார். இதன் பிறகு அவரின் இளவல் அரசப்பணியினைத் தொடர்ந்தார்.

**நூல் சிறப்பு:**

பெரிய புராணத்திற்கு மூல நூல் வன்தொண்டப் பெருமான் அருளிய “திருத்தொண்டத் தொகை” ஆகும். இதற்கு வழி நூல் நம்பியாண்டார் நம்பிகள் அருளிய “திருத்தொண்டர் திருவந்தாதி”. இச்செய்தியினைத் திருமலைச் சிறப்புக் கூறுமிடத்துக் காணலாம்.

“அந்த மெய் பதிகத்து அடியார்களை  
நந்தம்நாதன் ஆம் நம்பியாண்டார் நம்பி  
புந்தி ஆரப் புகன்ற வகையினால்  
வந்த வாறு வழாமல் இயம்புவோம்”

என்பது அச்சருக்கம் ஆகும்.

இதில் மொத்தம் 4286 செய்யுள்கள் உள்ளன. இவற்றில் 1255 பாடல்கள் ஞானசம்பந்தருடைய வரலாற்றை விளக்குகின்றன. ஞானசம்பந்தர் தமிழுக்கும், தமிழ்நாட்டிற்கும், தமிழ் மொழிக்கும், சைவத்திற்கும், சிவவழிபாட்டிற்கும் செய்த பேரூபகாரத்தைக் கருதி, புராணத்தில் நான்கில் ஒரு பாகத்தினைச் சேக்கிழார் அவருக்கே ஒதுக்கிவிட்டார், என்று அறிய முடிகிறது. ஞானசம்பந்தரைப் பிள்ளை என்று குறிப்பிட்டு “பிள்ளை பாதி புராணம் பாதி” என்று பிற்காலத்திலே பழமொழி கூறப்பட்டது இதனால்தான், என்று அறியமுடிகிறது.

உலகம், உயிர், கடவுள் இம்மூன்றும் ஒருங்கே அமைந்த காவியம் “பெரியபுராணம்” ஆகும். சேக்கிழாரின் அன்பின் உள்ளமாகிய உற்றுநிலை தோன்றிய கடல் “பெரியபுராணம்” என்று கூறலாம். “பெரியபுராணம்” சரித்திரத்தை எழுவித்ததாகக் கொண்டும் பெளராணிகத்தை ஊடே நுழைத்தும் எழுதப்பட்ட நூல் ஆகும்.

“பத்திச்சுவை நளி சொட்டச் சொட்ட பாடிய கவி வளவ” என்று சேக்கிழாரை மகாவித்துவான் மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம் பிள்ளை புகழ்கிறார். பெரிய புராணத்தின் வருணனைகள், அதன் சிறப்பிற்கு மற்றொரு காரணம், என்று சொல்லலாம். வருணனையோடு பல பொருட்களும் அமைந்திருக்கின்றன. அவை பாட்டு, ஓவியம், கலை, அரசியல், வாணிபம், தொழில், உழவு, பெண்மை, ஆண்மை, காதல், வண்மை, வீரம், தியாகம், ஆத்மசாந்தி, தத்துவம், பொதுமை, சீர்திருத்தம், புரட்சி, சரித்திரம், பெளராணிகம் போன்றவைகளாகும்.

பெரிய புராணத்தின் ஒரு பகுதியை முதன் முதலில் அச்சில் பதிப்பித்தவர் மழவை மகாலிங்க ஐயர். அப்பதிப்பு வெளிவந்த ஆண்டு 1843. காஞ்சிபுரம் மகாவித்துவான் சபாபதி முதலியார் பெரியபுராணப் பதிப்பில் இருமுறை ஈடுபட்டார். அவை முறையே 1857ஆம் ஆண்டிலும் 1870ஆம் ஆண்டிலும் நிகழ்ந்தன. சிதம்பரம் உபாத்தியாயர் பே. ராமலிங்கம் பிள்ளை பதிப்பு 1879ஆம் ஆண்டில் வெளியாயிற்று. ஆறுமுக நாவலர் முதற்பதிப்பு 1884ஆம் ஆண்டில் வெளியிடப்பட்டுள்ளது. இவர்கள் ஒவ்வொருவரும் அவ்வப்போது தனித்தனியே ஓலை ஏடுகளை ஆய்ந்து புராணத்தினைப் பதிப்பித்தனர். இவர்களது பதிப்புக்களைத் தழுவிப் பின்னர் வேறு சில பதிப்புகள் வெளிவந்தன. பெரிய புராணத்திற்கு முதன்முதலில் பொழிப்புரை எழுதியவர் மழவை மகாலிங்க ஐயர் ஆவார். அவ்வரை முற்றுப் பெறவில்லை. திருவண்ணாமலை ஆதினம் ஏறக்குறைய முக்காற் பகுதிக்கு பதவுரை இயற்றினார். அதனை இராமலிங்க சுவாமிகள் முற்றுவித்தார்கள்.

தற்காலத்தில் திரு. வி. கல்யாண சுந்தரனார் மற்றும் பேராசிரியர் அ.ச.ஞானசம்பந்தன் ஆகியோர் உரை எழுதி உள்ளனர்.

இந்நூலில் 63 நாயன்மார்கள் மற்றும் தொகை அடியார்களின் வரலாறு கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது. இதனை ம. பாலசுப்பிரமணிய முதலியார் பின்வரும் செய்யுளில் மிக அழகாகக் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளார்.

“பேயன்ன புறச் சமயப் பிணக்கு நூல்  
வழியனைத்தும் பிழையே யன்றி  
வாயன்மை தெளிந்து சைவ சித்தாந்த

வழி தேறி அத்த வாழ்விற  
போய்ணமி அஞ்செழுத்தும் திருநீறும்  
கண்டுகையும் பொருளாக் கொண்ட  
நாயன்மார் திருக்கூட்டம் பணிந்திறைஞ்சும்  
பெரும் பேறு நான் பெற்றேனால்”

பெரியபுராணத்தில் குறிப்பிடப்பட்டுள்ள 63 நாயன்மார்கள் பெயர் பின்வருமாறு:-

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) அதிபத்த நாயனார்                | 2) அப்பூதி அடிகள்                     |
| 3) அமர்ந்தி நாயனார்               | 4) அரிவாட்டய நாயனார்                  |
| 5) ஆனாய நாயனார்                   | 6) இசை ஞானியார்                       |
| 7) இடங்கழி நாயனார்                | 8) இயற்பகை நாயனார்                    |
| 9) இளையான் குடிமாற நாயனார்        | 10) உருத்திர பசுபதி நாயனார்           |
| 11) எறிபத்த நாயனார்               | 12) ஏயர்கோன்கலிக்காம நாயனார்          |
| 13) ஏனாதிநாதநாயனார்               | 14) ஐயடிகள் காடவர்கோன் நாயனார்        |
| 15) கணநாத நாயனார்                 | 16) கணம்புல்ல நாயனார்                 |
| 17) கண்ணப்ப நாயனார்               | 18) கலிக்கம்ப நாயனார்                 |
| 19) கலிய நாயனார்                  | 20) கழறிற்றறிவார் நாயனார்             |
| 21) கழற்சிங்க நாயனார்             | 22) காரி நாயனார்                      |
| 23) காரைக்காலம்மையார்             | 24) குங்குலியக் கலய நாயனார்           |
| 25) குலச்சிறைநாயனார்              | 26) கூற்றுவ நாயனார்                   |
| 27) கோச்செங்கட்சோழ நாயனார்        | 28) கோட்புலி நாயனார்                  |
| 29) சடைய நாயனார்                  | 30) சண்டேசுவர நாயனார்                 |
| 31) சத்திய நாயனார்                | 32) சாக்கிய நாயனார்                   |
| 33) சிறப்புலி நாயனார்             | 34) சிறுத்தொண்ட நாயனார்               |
| 35) சுந்தர மூர்த்தி சுவாமிகள்     | 36) செருத்துணை நாயனார்                |
| 37) சோமாசிமாறநாயனார்              | 38) தண்டியடிகள் நாயனார்               |
| 39) திருக்குறிப்புத்தொண்ட நாயனார் | 40) திருஞானசம்பந்த மூர்த்தி சுவாமிகள் |
| 41) திருநாவுக்கரசு சுவாமிகள்      | 42) திருநாளைப் போவார் நாயனார்.        |
| 43) திருநீலகண்ட நாயனார்           | 44) திருநீலகண்ட யாழ்ப்பாண நாயனார்     |
| 45) திரு நீல நக்க நாயனார்         | 46) திருமூலநாயனார்                    |
| 47) நமிநந்தியடிகள்                | 48) நரசிங்கமுனையரைய நாயனார்           |
| 49) நின்றசீர் நெடுமாற நாயனார்     | 50) நேச நாயனார்                       |
| 51) புகழ்ச்சோழ நாயனார்            | 52) புகழ்த்துணை நாயனார்               |
| 53) பூசலார் நாயனார்               | 54) பெருமிழலைக் குடும்ப நாயனார்       |
| 55) மங்கையர்க்கரசியார்            | 56) மானக்கஞ்சாறு நாயனார்              |
| 57) முருக நாயனார்                 | 58) முனையடுவார் நாயனார்               |
| 59) மூர்க்க நாயனார்               | 60) மூர்த்தி நாயனார்                  |
| 61) மெய்பொருள் நாயனார்            | 62) வாயிலார் நாயனார்                  |
| 63) விறன்மீண்ட நாயனார்            |                                       |

அறுபத்து மூன்று நாயன்மார்கள் தவிர ஒன்பது தொகையடியார்களின் கூட்டங்களைச் சேக்கிழார் பாடியுள்ளார். அவர்கள் தில்லை வாழ் அந்தணர், பொய்யடிமை இல்லாத புலவர், பத்தராயப் பணிவார், பரமனையே பாடுவார், சித்தத்தைச் சிவன்பாலே வைத்தார், திருவாரூர்ப் பிறந்தார், முப்போதும் திருமேனி தீண்டுவார், முழுநிறு பூசிய முனிவர், அப்பாலும் அடிச்சார்ந்தார் ஆகியோர் ஆவர்.

அறுபத்து மூன்று நாயன்மார்களுள் பன்னிரண்டு திருமுறைகளைச் சேர்ந்த பாடல்களைப் புனைந்தவர்கள் எழுவர் ஆவர்.

இவ்வறுபத்து மூன்று நாயன்மார்கள் மற்றும் தொகை அடியார்களின் வரலாற்றினைச் சிறப்பாகப் பெரிய புராணம் விளக்குகிறது.

பெரிய புராணம் “உலகெலாம்” என்று தொடங்கி “உலகெலாம்” என்று முடிக்கிறது. இது பெரியபுராணம்

எல்லா உலகுக்கும் உரியது என்பதைக் குறிக்கின்றது. இச்சிறப்பு மிக்க காவியத்தில் இசையும் கலந்துள்ளதில் ஐயம் ஒன்றுமில்லை என்றே எண்ணத் தோன்றுகிறது. இவ்வளவு பொருள் பொருந்தியுள்ள நூலில் இசைச் செய்திகளையும் கையாண்டு தமிழிசை உலகிற்குப் பெருமை சேர்த்துள்ளார் சேக்கிழார். இதனை அடுத்த இயலில் பார்ப்போம்.

தரவுகள்

1. சேக்கிழார் அருளிய திருத்தொண்டர்புராணம் - அ.ச. ஞானசம்பந்தன்
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3. திருஞானசம்பந்த சுவாமிகளின் தேவாரம் - திருப்பனந்தாள் மடம் பதிப்பு
4. South Indian Music - Part I to VI - P. Sambamurti
5. A Dictionary of South Indian Music and Musicians - Vol. I to III - P. Sambamurti

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#### FORM IV

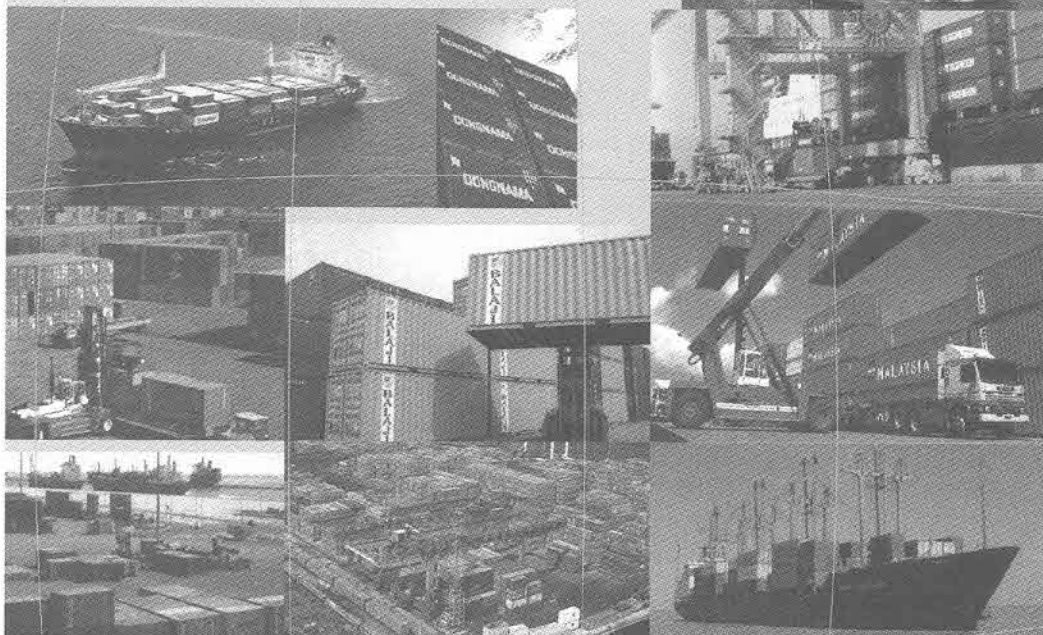
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## Kalam Paattu of Kerala

Mahitha Varma



*Kalam*

Kalamezhuthu or kalam paattu is a ritualistic art commonly performed in temples as well as noble households especially in the northern districts. Kalam literally means a diagram or drawing and paattu means song. Thus a combination of arts like music, drawing as well as literature is resplendent in this ritual. The socio-cultural ethos of Kerala is clearly depicted in a kalamezhuthu ceremony.

Kalamezhuthu is also called as Dhooli shilpam. The artist uses the floor as his canvas. Kalamezhuthu paattu is performed as part of the rituals to worship and propitiate gods like Kaali, Ayyappan or Vettakkorumakan. There are different types of kalam paattu like Bhagavati paattu, Vettekkorumakan<sup>1</sup> paattu, Ayyappan paattu and Sarpam paattu. A community called Kallaatu kuruppu owns the

privilege to conduct a kalamezhuthu ritual in brahmanical temples or kshetras and noble houses. A ritual called theeyaattu paattu is also similar to the kalam paattu. This ritual comprises of two varieties; Bhagavati Theeyaattu and Ayyappan Theeyaattu. The former which is popular in the southern provinces of Kerala is conducted by Theeyaattunnikal whereas the latter is accomplished by the Theeyadi Nambiar community belonging to Northern Kerala. The general order in which the kalam paattu and theeyaattu paattu are conducted, the songs sung and the colours used for kalam are almost the same. Regional differences may occur.

The place where the kalamezhuthu ceremony is conducted is called Paattarangu. This space is arranged for the ritual by placing a Peetham (a small seating), Nilavilakku (lamp) and cucumber followed by the purification process. Decorations like a canopy of palm fronds, garlands of red hibiscus flowers and tulasi or Ocimum leaves are hung above the kalam. The divine attire called pattu and sword are placed on the peetham.

The ritual starts with ucha paattu usually performed at noon. This is followed by the Tantri or the main priest worshipping Lord Ganapati. After the Nivedyam<sup>2</sup> is offered, the Marar<sup>3</sup> plays on the Chenda. Songs in praise of Lord Ganapati, Goddess Saraswati, Lord Krishna and Lord Shiva are usually sung at this point.



*Nandurni*

The song sung during the kalam paattu is called Niram. Generally there are two singers. The kuruppu sings to the accompaniment of Nandurni, a stringed instrument and a pair of cymbals called Kuzhitalam. Nandurni is also used as a shruti and laya vadya in kalam paattu. It has

a rectangular hollow body with a projected tail made out of the wood of Bilva tree (Aegle Marmelos). Strings are stretched over its body and tightened to a peg at the bottom end. The instrument has five frets fixed on the resonator. A Nandurni is about five feet long and six inches wide. The strings are strummed with a plectrum made of buffalo horn. Nandurni is normally held in a vertical position and played with the fingers on the right hand.

<sup>1</sup> Son of Shiva, when he takes the form of a Kirata or hunter.

<sup>2</sup> Food offered to God

<sup>3</sup> Traditional musician of Kerala temple

Kuzhitalam is a pair of bell metal discs about 2 or 3 inches in diameter with a hemispherical depression. The cymbals are held by passing loops through the hole provided in the middle of the disc. This is played by striking one disc against the other.

During the ucha paattu, the kuruppu sings Niram in praise of the deity in whose honour the kalam paattu is performed. Ucha paattu is followed by Mullackal paattu in which songs invoking various deities are rendered. A special feature of Mullackal paattu is the performance of Velichappadu or the oracle. He dances vigorously to the beats of Chenda. This dance is colloquially called as Eedum Koorum. The kuruppu sings Niram throughout the pooja and also during the Kalathilattam performed by the Velichappadu.

After Kalathilattam, the Velichappadu takes bath and returns to conduct an important rite called Pantheerayiram in which 12000 coconuts offered by the devotees are broken. Soon after this, Kuruppu renders a few more songs and ends Mullackal paattu by playing sa-pa-sa on the Nandurni.

The kalam is drawn only in the evening during the Anthipaattu. A kalam of the deity being worshipped is prepared with five different coloured powders - white, black, yellow, green and red. The coloured powders used for the kalam are prepared from natural products only. The pigments are extracted from plants - rice flour (white), charcoal powder (black), turmeric powder (yellow), powdered green leaves (green), and a mixture of turmeric powder and lime (red). A number of Nirams are rendered during Anthipaattu. One among them is Ammanachaaya. Kesadipada Varnana of the deity to whom the kalam is dedicated figures as the main song in Anthipaattu. The third category includes songs called Kailaayam, sung to propitiate the other deities.

The kalams or drawings are erased with palm fronds at the end of the ritual to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The Velichappadu again enters the kalam and dances to the accompaniment of Chenda holding the divine sword. He then distributes the coloured powder used to draw kalam as oblation to the devotees. While he places back the sword on the Peetham, Kuruppu recites a verse in praise of Brahmaloaka, Vishnuloka and Kailasa during which Nandurni is played and thus the ritual concludes.

Ragas used for kalam paattu are Shankarabharanam, Malahari, Madhyamavati as well as some of the ancient ragas like Puraneer and Samantamalahari. If we examine the songs sung during theeyattu paattu, traces of ragas like Sahana and Kedaram are found. The commonly used talas in kalam paattu are Triputa, Eka, Chempata (Adi talam of Carnatic music), Atanta (Khanda Ata of Carnatic music). The style adopted in rendering the songs is of Sopana Sangeeta. The language in which these songs are composed is a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam.

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## *60 Years Felicitation*

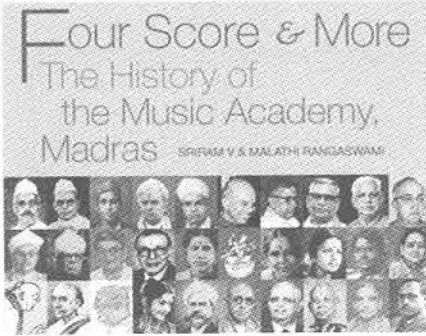
Sabha members who have completed an unbroken tenure of 20 years or more as members and are above the age of 60 years as on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 will be felicitated on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2013.



## Book Review

*P. P. Ramachandran*

**Four Score & More: The History of The Music Academy, Madras;**  
published by Westland Books ; Pages 302 ; Price Rs. 2,000.



The Music Academy, Madras is a landmark institution in the history of the fine arts. Its genesis can be traced to the historic All India Congress session held in Madras in 1927 where a resolution for founding an academy of music was passed. The idea took shape in 1928 when the Academy was formally inaugurated by Sir C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1928. The Academy which was aimed at setting a standard for Carnatic music was nurtured in its early years by public-spirited and far-sighted men and women representing diverse walks of life and different political and religious beliefs, who however, were all

united in their vision of an institution that would nourish and encourage classical fine arts. Apart from providing a platform for academic discussions and debate on the arts, the Music Academy pioneered the December music festival of Madras which is undoubtedly one of the largest such festivals in the world.

In 1929, the Academy began the practice of hosting annual conferences on music at various venues including the Senate House, Mani Iyer's Hall, People's Park, old Woodlands Hotel, R.R. Sabha and P.S. High School grounds, before it found a permanent place at the current venue. Ragas were debated upon, theory of music was discussed in detail, young talent was encouraged and senior artistes were given a platform to present their art to the cognoscenti. A series of publications was brought out by the Academy and these works have enlightened scholars and laymen. In the book, musician-painter S. Rajam and committee member of the Academy, K. Vaitheeswaran, recall the 1927 conference held at Spur Tank.

In the 1930s The Music Academy championed the cause of classical dance and provided a forum for discussions on the subject and more importantly, presented dance performances with a view to getting the public to see the beauties of a traditional art that was in danger of dying.

In addition to South Indian music and dance, the Music Academy has also been a venue for Hindustani music and classical dance forms from the rest of India. Over the years the Academy's December music season became a hallmark of efficiency and music-lovers from the world over rushed to Madras to partake of the nectar provided.

The book under review is a veritable biography of the institution in the past eighty years - its growth, the numerous personalities who were in charge and the incidents and episodes that were woven into this brilliant tapestry. According to Dr. C.Rangarajan, ex-Governor of Reserve Bank of India who released this book, the seeds for writing its history were sown independently by two persons who together brought out this book. V. Sriram, one of the co-authors of the book is passionate about Carnatic music and is a historian of music and a prolific writer. Malathi Rangaswami, hails from a family closely associated with the Academy over the years. Her Ph.D. thesis, completed in 2008, was the "History of The Music Academy." Her father-in-law Shree T.T.Krishnamachari was one of the pillars of this Academy. The Academy's history is one that transformed the cultural scene of South India. The authors have worked very hard at putting this together to bring out a kaleidoscopic account of this iconic institution.

"Four Score and More" commemorates eighty years of an institution of which India can be justly proud. As the Academy forges ahead in its quest to meet the expectations of future generations, this book will prove an invaluable account of what went into its making, its exciting journey and its present pre-eminence.

This labour of love made the authors delve deep into the Academy archives; they obtained inputs from The Hindu archives, magazines such as Kalki, Ananda Vikatan, Sruti, and individuals such as S.Rajam and A.R. Sundaram. The book is full of anecdotes about some of the greatest names in the music and dance fields. To cite one, in 1936, Veenai Dhanammal heard that T.R. Rajarathinam Pillai was taking the Academy stage for the first time, at Royapettah. Very old and with poor vision, she got into a rickshaw and went up to the awfully crowded entrance of G.P. Road. Since the rickshaw could not go further, Dhanammal got down and felt her way along the wall up to the hall. Once she reached the venue, she was recognised and led inside. After the performance was over, she was missing, for she had already reached the stage to congratulate the nagaswaram maestro. As the curtains came down that evening, the image that remained was that of Dhanammal blessing Pillai!

The book has done ample justice to the Music Academy's service record spanning eight decades, how it has ascetically directed the destiny of the fine arts and proved its mighty role in the cause of classical music. All those who have music in them and the Indian community of music professionals will remember with justifiable pride and gratitude the hospitality extended by it.

It must be observed that the authors have held the scales even in respect of conflicts and one observes a strict fairness in the recounting of all events, big and small. The Academy has had its troubles and the causes varied from infighting among office-bearers to the idiosyncrasies of musicians and their tantrums and boycotts. When the Tamil Isai movement was in a state of frenzy, M.S. Subbulakshmi did not participate in the Academy series for a few years. Senior vidwans like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, hurt by the perceived ill-treatment meted out to them, boycotted the function at which Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation for the Academy's new building. There was also the tiff over Ariyakudi's insistence on the Academy providing a concert slot for Dhanammal. The presidential years of K.V. Krishnaswamy Iyer and T.T. Vasu are significant landmarks in the history of the Academy. In a brief note under the heading "The Fall of Academics", the authors note that the academic side became increasingly neglected in the 1990s and say, without mincing words, that, "Slowly but steadily, the Academy was losing its grip over the scholarly side and was downgrading itself to the status of a mere sabha."

One also gets to know the close association of the Music Academy with the freedom movement.

A stunning display of photographs, a wide variety of snippets and a wealth of information on dance and Hindustani music add to the richness of the publication. The illustrations are apt; the language is lucid and the print is beautiful. There is no doubt that this will become a collectors' item.

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## *Theatre Festival*

A festival of Tamil plays will be held from 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March 2013 featuring 'Marupakkam' and 'Yaar Paiyyan' by Kala Nilayam, Chennai, a play by Shanmukhananda Theatre Group, 'Chocolate Krishna' by Crazy Creations, Chennai, 'Sannidhanam' and 'TRP' by Bombay Chanakya.

### The Swati Controversy

I am V. Rajagopal, son-in-law of the late Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer, a renowned musicologist and a Sanskrit scholar. It is very painful to note the comment made by Shree A. Seshan in his write-up "The Swati Controversy" about "Swati Tirunal and his Music", a book written by Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer. Seshan says it is "Hagiography than a biography" (page 9, April-June 2012 issue). It is quite unfortunate to hear such a remark from a quarterly journal Shanmukha. Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer was a well-known musicologist, accepted by the music world throughout the country. Mr. Seshan may not know him. Had he known the credentials of the late Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer he would not have made such an unworthy remark about his book.

In this connection I may also furnish certain facts about Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer:

1. Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer was a Dean of faculty and Head of the Department of Sanskrit in Kerala University.

2. He was an acknowledged researcher and a sound musicologist. His writings on literature, Indian culture and music are highly scholarly and research-oriented. He was a real researcher and his output was only the result of dedicated, painstaking efforts.

3. His contribution to the cause of music is unquantifiable. However, a few are cited here to illustrate –

- a. Sangeetha Sastra Pravesika, a Malayalam Book on the theory of Carnatic Music, prescribed for University Students (published by Bhasha Institute, Trivandrum)
- b. Sangeetha Kalpadrumam, a translation work on Dr. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar's book in Tamil. (Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer had personal contact with Dr. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar)
- c. Swati Tirunal and his Music.
- d. Swati Tirunal Kirtanamalai
- e. Purandara Kirtanavali, etc.

4. Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer was associated with Madras Music Academy since 1945. He used to present a paper every year in the Annual conference of Madras Music Academy until his demise in the year 1984. In 1982, Madras Music Academy presented him with the prestigious award "CERTIFICATE OF MERIT".

5. Most importantly, Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer was an ardent admirer of Swati kritis and an inner urge prompted him to conduct a research in Swati kritis for better appreciation and NOT FOR EARNING ROYAL PLEASURE AND MUNIFICENCE, as was wrongly interpreted by some people, including the late Veena Vidwan S. Balachandar. In fact Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer had never visited Travancore Palace, in spite of being invited several times.

6. Dikshitar kritis and Swati kritis can be better appreciated only by persons who have knowledge of Sanskrit language. Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer basically belonged to a Vaidika family and his knowledge of Sanskrit language enabled him to understand and appreciate Swati Tirunal kritis

better. He spent a good part of his life on musical research, particularly Swati Tirunal kritis.

7. Great scholars like Dr. V. Raghavan, Prof. Sambamoorthy and R. Rangaramanuja Iyengar had already acknowledged Maharaja Swati Tirunal as a contemporary composer of the musical trinity, even before Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer authored the book on Swati Tirunal.

8. "A Note on Swati Controversy" written by Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer himself towards the end of his book "Swati Tirunal Kirtanamala" published in 1984 by College Book House, Trivandrum is enclosed. That was his last work on musicology.

My humble submission is that your esteemed journal "Shanmukha" may take care of the facts mentioned by me along with the note on Swati Controversy written by Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer. On the eve of the bi-centenary celebration of Maharaja Swati Tirunal, the publication of my submission as well as the note on the controversy written by Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer would help connoisseurs of music to get a clear picture about Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer and Maharaja Swati Tirunal.

*V. Rajagopal*

*Editor: Due to paucity of space in the current issue, the note on the Swati controversy written by Dr. S. Venkatasubramania Iyer will be published in Shanmukha Jan-Mar 2013 issue.*

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## WRITE TO US !

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Sabha Roundup

**Vocal Concert of Gayathri Venkataraghavan 15<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

Nalini Dinesh



(l to r) N. Manoj Shiva (mridangam), N. Guruprasad (ghatam), Gayathri Venkataraghavan, Mysore V. Srikanth (violin)

One of the highlights of Gayathri's concert was her beautiful rendition of the Tyagaraja kriti in Begada *Neevera kula*. The kalpana swaras were also soaked in raga bhava. *Jambupate* was the chosen vilamba kala kriti followed by a brisk rendition of *Shree Shankaraguruvaram*. Gayathri strove for utmost clarity and melody in every phrase of her Todi alapana, though her explorations in the lower octave needed more volume and clarity. Papanasam Sivan's *Kartikeya Gaangeya* was rendered with an additional charanam which is not commonly rendered. Neraval and brief swara prastara was at "Maal maruga". A rapid-fire flash established Keeravani, the alapana portraying a nice flavor of the raga. The tanam had super-fast phrases. The pallavi was in 2-kalai Adi tala with ½ eduppu, poorvangam in chaturashra gati and uttarangam in khanda gati – *Ma Madurai valar Meenakshi madhuravani keeravani* – the setting was melodious. Neraval and kalpana swaras in 2 speeds were sung. The ragamalika swaras were in Kedaram, Shreeranjani and Hamsanaadam. Shreeranjani raga did not come out clearly. The concert concluded with *Bhavayami Gopalabalam*, a good rendering of *Pag Ghunguroo* (albeit with a Tamil accent) and *Villinaiyotha puruvam*.

**Sangeetha Pracharya Award Function 16th September 2012**

Jyothi Mohan



◀ Smt. & Shree Adyar Lakshman being felicitated by Sabha President V. Shankar. Vice President Smt. Santhosh Rajan looks on

The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha commemorates M.S. Subbulakshmi's birthday by honouring an exemplary Guru with the Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi Sangeetha Pracharya award. This year the noted Bharatanatyam Guru Adyar K. Lakshman received the

coveted award. The Sabha President Shree V. Shankar in his address explained why the award was named after M.S. Subbulakshmi. It may seem a bit incongruous to name the award after one who had taught only one student all her life, that too her own daughter, he said. She also never lent her name to any award, but made an exception in this case, he stated. The devotion with which she sang, infusing bhakti in every note has inspired generations of musicians. Her quest for perfection, respect for fellow artistes, concern for the rasikas and above all, her humility and service to mankind made her the *manasika* guru of every practitioner of this divine art form. Hence, she was the teacher of all teachers and the Best Teacher award has been rightly named after her, he said.

Born on 16th December 1933, Adyar K. Lakshman hails from Kuppam in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Shree Lakshman and his brother Shree Rama Rao showed unusual musical and rhythmic talent as young boys. They had the good fortune to receive their early training and exposure to the classical arts from Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale herself. Lakshman graduated in 1954 from Kalakshetra in Bharatanatyam, Carnatic music and nattuvangam. He stayed on in Kalakshetra and was awarded the Government of India scholarship. He obtained a post-graduate diploma in 1956. He also learnt mridangam and Kathakali. He was cast by Rukmini Devi in prominent Kalakshetra productions like 'Kumara Sambhavam', 'Kutrala Kuravanji', 'Seeta Swayamvaram' and 'Usha Parinayam'. After leaving Kalakshetra he joined Vyjayanthimala's Natyalaya and worked there for a decade. He founded the Bharatha Choodamani Academy of Fine Arts in 1969. He has trained many famous dancers and produced dance drama productions like 'Varunapuri Kuravanji', 'Aiychiar Kuravai,' etc. He has also choreographed classical dance sequences in films.

Adyar Lakshman has received several awards for his outstanding contribution to the art of Bharatanatyam, as a dance guru, choreographer, composer and nattuvanar. He received the Padma Shri in 1989, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and the Kalaimamani from the Tamil Nadu government besides several others.

The citation was read out by the Honorary Secretary Shree Amarnath Sury. Guru Adyar Lakshman was presented with the award which carries a citation, a cash prize of Rs. 25,000, a beautiful big brass lamp and a shawl.

In response, Guru Adyar Lakshman thanked the Sabha for considering him worthy of the award. He remembered with reverence and affection Shree Doraiswamy Iyer who took him and his brother to Rukmini Devi and thus charted out his course in life. He mentioned all the great stalwarts who taught at Kalakshetra with gratitude and spoke of the meticulous training he received there. He also recalled how playing mridangam for namasankeertanams enhanced his rhythm-related skills. He commended the Sabha for promoting the classical arts in a big way.

The award ceremony was followed by a harikatha on Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi by Smt. Revathi Sankaran.



◀ Revathi Sankaran

Revathi Sankaran, in her inimitable way, brought M.S. Amma alive through her candid observations and lovely music. To retain the flavour and the humour, a first person narrative would be more appropriate.

**Revathi said: I was asked by Sruti's Pattabhiraman to do a harikatha on M.S. as by then I had successfully done a couple of harikathas on other famous musicians of yore. I was hesitant but he convinced me to meet her and ask her approval for my script. M.S. Amma was very happy to see me as she knew my grandmother and mother well. My mother had said that**

when M.S. Amma held me, a baby then, in her arms, I cried. M.S. Amma is said to have remarked that I cried in perfect alignment to shruti! My mother advised me as I grew up that if I was not able to align myself to the shruti, I should quit singing!

Consider M.S. Amma's date of birth which happens to be 16<sup>th</sup> September 1916. If you take 16, 1+6 i.e. 7 stands for saptaswaras. The 9<sup>th</sup> month, i.e. 9, stands for the navarasas. Thus it is a very significant date.

*Endhan idathu thozhum....* (As usual, Revathi's mellifluous voice had the audience swaying in approval!)

Throwing caution to the winds, I asked her if she did not feel shy and awkward to appear without a blouse in Sakuntalai. Amma smiled shyly and said, "Wasn't that the mode of dress of women those days? Besides, if it was not aesthetic would Mama have allowed it?" Her simplicity silenced me!

I asked her why she took on the male role of Narada in the movie Savitri instead of being the heroine. To that she replied, "I did so as the role offered me several songs to sing." Which was your favourite song, I asked her. I expected her to come up with *Anandamensolvane*, *Premaiyil* or the sparkling *Manamohananga*. She replied "*Doora kadal thaandi povome*" ! "Interestingly, the comical song by N. S. Krishnan and T. S. Durairaj, *Innikki kaalayiley*, was a hit and people loved the dialogue", Amma reminisced.

In Meera, why were you wearing a small glued-on nose ring, I asked. (I wonder how many of you in the audience noticed that!). To that Amma explained, "My heavy diamond nose jewel would not have suited the Rajasthani background of the movie. Hence I could not wear my usual nose ring." Why did the song *He Hare Dayala* start so low, I wanted to know. "Did you notice how high the climax reaches? It would not be possible were I to have started it on higher notes", Amma explained. (Here, Revathi sang that song with practised ease, earning great applause). Amma said, "Where do you find music directors like S.V.Venkataraman now? His songs are truly immortal!"

Did you also sing Desha Bhakti songs like D.K.Pattamal and others? I asked. "I did," she replied. *Paattukkoru pulavan....* by M.M. Dandapani Desikar (Revathi's passionate rendering sent the audience down memory lane!)

Have you heard N.C.Vasanthakokilam , I asked? Amma closed her eyes for a moment and said in a soft voice, "What a voice hers was! What *brighas* she was capable of! When people told me my voice resembled hers, I would feel thrilled!" My jaw dropped! For a reigning queen of music to have so much regard for a fellow-singer, to be so ready with praise for her, showed how magnanimous Amma was. Where can you find that attitude today? *Thithikkum senthamizhaal ....*(Just as we were nodding and enjoying it, Revathi went on to sing *Jaya Vande Mataram* in that blemish-less voice). Amma impressed me by singing *Deivathamizh nattinile* by Kalki from memory even after so many years! I asked her why did you sing "palagundan" in *Shyamasundara*? What does it mean? Amma thought for a moment and then laughed, "Oh! It is not palagundan, it is padam undan!"

*Maname kanamum.....* (Greatly appreciated by the audience!)

*Nadayum talara deham odunga, Navathu kuzhara, kangal manga....* I am completing 70 years, who knows what the future holds! I do hope I continue as I am doing, said Revathi with her characteristic humour!

**Amma's child-like enthusiasm and replies, her modesty, her shyness, has to be seen to believe!**

*Engum nirai naadabrahmam...sang Revathi.*

**This hallowed hall has seen the best and greatest of artistes perform. I am reminded of the song *Naadabrahma swaroopini* (Revathi renders the song).**

**I am indeed happy to have got this unexpected opportunity to stand before you and talk about Amma. I had presented this before her on her 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday. When I went to her and asked her if I had done well, she hugged me and said "Sabaash!" That, to me, was worth much more than any award given on this land!**

Mesmerized by her style, spontaneity, melodious singing, ready wit and humour, the audience was settling down for a long and enjoyable evening with Revathi Sankaran. She however abruptly wrapped it all up, leaving the avid listeners craving for more, promising however, to return the following evening with much more!

***Celebration of 60 years of Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha and 50 years of Fine Arts Society, Chembur 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012***

*Nalini Dinesh*



*(l to r) R.S. Rajagopal (Hon. Secretary, FAS), K. Ganesh Kumar (Vice Chairman, Board of Trustees, FAS), R. Radhakrishnan (Trustee/President of Managing Committee, FAS), Dr. V. Rangaraj (Vice President, SFASS), Aruna Sairam, V.S. Amarnath Sury (Hon. Secretary, SFASS), N. Raja (Hon. Secretary, SFASS)*

A pleasant function was held to celebrate the joint jubilee of two leading sabhas of Mumbai – the Diamond Jubilee of Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha (SFASS) and the Golden Jubilee of the Fine Arts Society, Chembur (FAS).

Dr. V. Rangaraj, Vice President, SFASS, gave a short speech about the Diamond Jubilee & Golden Jubilee celebrations of the respective sabhas. Shree Ganesh Kumar, President, FAS then addressed the audience in Tamil in his inimitable style, peppering his speech with interesting quotes. He spoke about how FAS came into being 10 years after the inception of SFASS, as a need arose for a cultural organisation to cater to the people who had migrated to the eastern suburbs of Mumbai. If Shanmukha is the presiding deity of Shanmukhananda, then Ganesha is the Presiding deity of FAS. Both the sabhas are like sister institutions, progressing hand-in-hand. He expressed his happiness at the common programme in celebration of the respective jubilees and lauded the choice of artiste, Smt. Aruna Sairam who is one of the most popular artistes in Carnatic music today. Smt. Aruna Sairam in turn said that she was very grateful to both the



sabhas, who have nurtured her latent talent. She spoke about the hundreds of concerts that she had attended at SFASS along with her parents at a very young age, which have made her what she is today. She reminisced about her early years of learning music at Mumbai.

The office bearers of both the sabhas felicitated each other. FAS gave beautiful idols of Ganesha, Saraswathi and two figurines of ladies with lamps to SFASS.



(l to r) J. Vaidyanathan (mridangam), Dr. S. Karthik (ghatam), Aruna Sairam, B. Raghavendra Rao (violin)

A brief flash of Bhairavi heralded a lively *Viriboni* varnam with beautiful percussive support and this set the tone for a highly absorbing concert with not a dull moment. *Baagaayanayya* and Athana alapana followed with *Balakanakamaya* and kalpana swaras that brought out all possibilities of the raga. A shloka in Lalita raga *Namostu Devyai* preceded *Hiranmayeem*. Aruna's rendition of *Koniyadina* (Kambhoji) lived up to her description of the sangatis in the pallavi as the tiers of a temple gopuram. The attractive chittaswaram in this kriti was used by her as a take-off point for the kalpana swaras. Kuraippu was performed at gandharam as well as dhaivatam before landing back at the chittaswaram which was rendered fully again before ending with the pallavi line. The tani avartanam by J. Vaidyanathan on the mridangam and Dr. S. Karthik on the ghatam was quite short but very good with  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  akshara odukkal and the rolling sound of the ghatam. *Kana vendamo* (Shreeranjani), *Kalyanarama* (Hamsanaadam) with swaras at "Raghava" and the padam *Payyada* followed tani and then a host of tukkadas that Aruna is famous for - the abhang *Bhaje Mridang*, *Enaguaane ranga*, *Teertha Vitthala*, *Maadu meikkum kanna*, *Enda kavi paadinalum* and *Vishamakkara kannan*. The next item was a viruttham based on Kantimati Pillaitthamizh *Kantimati taaye* which was sung in Anandabhairavi, Athana, Neelambari and Kapi which pleasingly (and fittingly) led to *Chinnanajiru Kiliye*. It was touches like these that made this concert so engaging. Oothukkadu Venkata Kavi's Kalinga Nartana tillana and Swati Tirunal's *Bhujaga shaayino* mangalam concluded the concert. B. Raghavendra Rao provided violin support.

### Vocal Concert of P. Unnikrishnan 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012

Nalini Dinesh

It was a disappointing evening, especially for those in the audience who had heard and enjoyed Unnikrishnan's concert last year at the sabha. Was it the selection of ragas and kritis? Was it a case of a bad throat? It was puzzling as to why he seems to have adopted a close-mouthed style of singing. The loud microphone volume also contributed to a less-than-pleasant listening experience, especially during the Pantuvarali alapana. In every alapana, as soon as the mood was established, along came some phrases in a lighter mode, to spoil the good work. While



(l to r) Charumathi Raghuraman (violin), Dr. S. Karthik (ghatam), P. Unnikrishnan, Anantha R. Krishnan (mridangam)

Natakuranji started off well, too much of dwelling on MDN took away from the raga bhava. Malayamarutam alapana (kriti – *Karpaga Manohara*) had pleasing phrases. Charumathi's alapana as well as kalpana swaras for this item were very good. *Mokshamu galada* was the main item before RTP. Anantha Krishnan and Dr. Karthik's accompaniment for the singing was good as expected and they played some interesting patterns in the tani, though the saval-javab was raucous. Unnikrishnan made his Rishabhapriya alapana interesting with some pleasing brigas. Charumathi's sangatis around the rishabham produced a charming picture of the raga. The pallavi was *Kaana kidaikkum Sabesan darisanam kandaal kali teerum* in khanda tripudita tala with eduppu at 3 aksharas after samam. The setting had attractive odukkal. The ragamalika swaras were in Hamsanandi, Bahudari, Ranjani and Athana.

***Vasanthotsavam (16<sup>th</sup> October 2012) and Srinivasa Kalyanam (17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012) in pictures***

*Nalini Dinesh*

The sabha was fortunate to witness Vasanthotsavam and Srinivasa Kalyanam right in the sabha premises thanks to Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanam who agreed to conduct the utsavam and celestial wedding as part of the sabha's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The wedding of Lord Venkateshwara and Goddess Padmavati was performed as prescribed in the Shastras. The hall resonated with Vedic chanting and ceremonial music and the air was redolent with the fragrance of sandalwood and flowers.



*Stage set for the utsavam*



*Milk abhishekam for the Lord in Vasanthotsavam*



Abhishekam using sahasra paatram



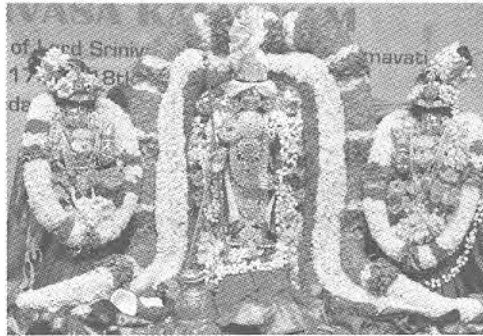
Lord Venkateswara and his consorts bedecked



Packed venue for the divine wedding



Priest displaying the mangala sutra



Kalyana Kolam

**Annual Music-Dance-Drama Festival (19<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> October 2012) in pictures**



Dance Ballet 'Ganga Durga Parvati Vivaha' by Hemamalini and troupe



A scene from Hindi play 'Biwi O Biwi'



(l to r) Vishwanath Shirodkar (tabla), Ashiwini Bhide Deshpande, Seema Shirodkar (harmonium)



'Amrut Lata' by Ashok Hande of Chaurang

### Pt. Birju Maharaj and Shashwati Sen 19th October 2012.



Birju Maharaj and disciple Shashwati Sen performing

Pandit Birju Maharaj, torch-bearer of the Kalka-Bindadin gharana of Lucknow is synonymous with Kathak. The sprightly seventy five year-old legend mesmerised the audience with his ready wit, exquisite abhinaya, mind-boggling permutations and combinations of rhythm ending with his characteristic dramatic but graceful flourish and soulful singing too. His forte is presenting ordinary, day-to-day- life themes in short compositions set to complex rhythmic patterns, which to the layman look simple and appealing. He demonstrated the 'goal tihai' conceived by him when he found his students were hooked to the television while the World Cup Hockey match was being played. Shaswati Sen was at her best, both in nritta and abhinaya. The costume could have been better than the drab brown she had chosen for the evening. The tabla came alive with Yogesh Samsiji's artistry, matching Panditji's *bol* for *bol*. Sheer magic woven by Samsiji found a fitting reply in Panditji's crystal clear footwork his ghungroos articulating every modulation of the tabla.

### Dance Ballets by Bharathanjali troupe, Chennai 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Jyothi Mohan



◀ A scene from Anita Guha's dance ballet 'Kishkinda Kandam & Sundara Kandam'

Mere words cannot convey any of the magic that we witnessed at the Shanmmukhananda Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi auditorium on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012. Anita Guha's vivid imagination, grand choreography with a vision that defies description coupled with soulful music and excellent dancing took our breath away! Bharathanjali, Chennai brought us two productions –

'Kishkinda Kandam and Sundara Kandam' on the first day followed by a dance drama 'Annamacharya' on the second.

Kishkinda Kandam opened with a very poignant scene depicting Rama's angst on being separated from his soul mate Sita. The deep anguish in the eyes of Nidheesh Kumar of Kalakshetra who very convincingly played Rama, did indeed convey the pathos very effectively. The flowers, peacocks and deer remind him of his consort and his sadness was matched by the raga Karnaranjani aptly chosen to convey the melancholy mood.

Mukhari was the raga chosen for the meeting of Sugreeva and Hanuman. The dance of Vali and the coy Tara was beautifully choreographed to a song in Reetigowla which was replete with swaraksharas. The fight between Vali and Sugreeva was full of power as well as humour. Sugreeva with a war cry came onto the stage from the auditorium. The engrossing fight sequence choreographed by Thiruchelvam (Vali) and Madhusudanan (Sugreeva) alumni of Kalakshetra had cartwheels, somersaults and wrestling bouts accompanied by grunts and loud cries which delighted the audience! Sugreeva's coronation was celebrated by the *vanaras* with a beautiful dance in Kadanakutoohalam. Hameerkalyani was the raga chosen for the scene with Jatayu whose costume was very beautifully conceived.

Sundarakandam began with Hanuman flying towards Lanka. His encounter with Lankini had the audience in splits. Satvikaa Shankar as Hanuman drew spontaneous applause. Seeta in Ashokavana lived her role. Her shyness, fear of the *rakshasis* surrounding her and her anguish at being separated from Rama was convincingly portrayed by Janani Sethunarayanan. Pavitra Bhat as Ravana fitted the bill. His vibrant nritta and ebullient gestures were a perfect foil for the modest, shy Seeta. Their conversation was in raga Vasanta. The scene when Hanuman meets Seeta, hands over Rama's ring and receives the *choodamani* in return was etched with poignancy.

The confrontation between Indrajit and Hanuman, the meeting of Ravana and Hanuman and the abandon with which Saatvika danced as Hanuman while setting Lanka on fire were memorable. Saramati was used to show the moving moment when Hanuman describes Seeta's anguish to Rama who is distraught on beholding her *choodamani* handed over by Hanuman. The concluding scene saw the building of the bridge to Lanka, laced with humour.

The excellent lyrics as well as the music score by Neyveli Santhanagopalan had a big hand in the success of the production. The recorded music had the mellifluous voices of Gayatri Venkataraghavan, Sriranjani Santhanagopalan, Nisha Rajagopal and Neyveli Santhanagopalan. Violin accompaniment by Ranjani Ramakrishnan, mridangam and other percussion instruments by Suresh, Chitraveena by Bhargavi Ganesh and flute by Sruthi Sagar added lustre to the music score. The extremely talented, hardworking team of dancers ensured the success of the presentation. The commitment of every single artiste was palpable, each dancing with total involvement, a testimony to the wonderful, able training by Guru Anita Guha.



A scene from Anita Guha's dance ballet 'Annamacharya'

On Vijayadashami, Anita Guha presented the dance drama entitled 'Annamacharya'. The Bharatanjali troupe created a rich tapestry of the life and works of the famous saint-poet Annamacharya or Annamayya.

The curtains opened to show Annamacharya asleep. In his sleep he had a vision of Lord Venkateshwara. So he travelled to Tirumala to have a glimpse of the Lord. He sang *Brahma kadigina padamu* in Mukhari. Annamayya expresses his immense joy on seeing Venkatesha and sings *Podaganti mayya* in Mohanam. The description of the hills was interesting. The awesome Garuda bringing the hill Kridachala which was shaped like Adishesha, created by girls swaying like snakes made for impressive viewing. Annamayya expresses in his kriti that Rama and Hanuman are *avatars* of Venkateshwara. Tasteful humour in the scenes depicting Hanuman and the monkeys building the bridge had the audience laughing. The Lord in Vaikuntham was as big as He was small and this was brought home by the tiny Balakrishna (Bhagyashree) lying on a banyan leaf sucking his toe on the floor of the stage while the magnificent Lord flanked by his consort lay on the Adishesha with his hood fanning out above him. The audience burst into applause as the child remained motionless in that position.

The glorious scene showing the lotus opening to reveal Mahalakshmi remains etched in our minds. Girls in pink costumes depicting the slow opening of petals showed the beautiful imagination of Anita Guha. *Paramatmudai Hari Pattapurani* showed the Ashtalakshmis in all their splendour. In the depiction of Vishnu and his consort, costumes were grand and the entire scene transported us to heaven.

On returning to his village he had a vision of Venkateshwara and his two consorts. The Kalyanotsavam with vahanas was brought forth in full grandeur. He describes the 'uyyala' (oonjal) scene following Vishnu's marriage which was a sheer delight to behold. In Hari Antaranga he describes the dance of Alamelumanga and Hari. The delicate romance between the two was very subtly brought out. Janani Sethunaryanan as the shy and beautiful Alamelumanga did full justice to her role. When she playfully strikes his face with a flower, he gets annoyed. A penitent Alamelumanga pleads with her lord to forgive her. Their adoration for each other, looked on by Annamayya, was beautifully visualized. Pavitra as Annamayya, sitting in a corner on the stage, showing us all this and more by effective abhinaya steeped in bhakti, was indeed a treat to watch.

*Jo Achutananda* and *Rara chinnanna* were delightfully portrayed. The very popular kriti *Muddugare Yashoda* depicted well-known episodes of little Krishna showing the universe in his mouth to mother Yashoda, Kalinga and Kamsa mardhanam. Navaratna Krishnas, all below the age of 10 years, danced most endearingly with perfection. The scene ending with Annamacharya surrounded by the winsome little Krishnas drew thunderous applause. The slithering movement of Kalinga was very imaginatively done with the dancers gliding on the stage perfectly, evoking instant applause.

The folk movements set to a lively *Chakkani talliki changubhala* were much appreciated. The Brahmotsavam was brought before our eyes in all its splendour. Krishna, Venkatesha, Saraswati, Indra and other Gods with their beautiful vahanas formed a colourful pageant. The costumes were grand and very aesthetic. The passage of time was indicated by Annamayya aging with every scene and Pavitra Bhat literally lived the role. The dance drama ended with Annamacharya attaining moksha. The last few years of the aging Annamayya were portrayed by Pavitra in a very sensitive manner, touching a chord in the viewers.

Excellent singing by Shree Hariprasad, Nandini Aravind and Vasudha Ravi accompanied by Ramesh on the flute, Muruganandam on violin, veena by Padmini, percussion by Suresh and add-on music by Venkatasubramanian made the dance drama an audio-visual treat. The skilful lighting was by Srinivas and Ayappan. Special mention must be made of the makeup artistes Ramu, Bhoopati and Albert who did a wonderful job.

The dancers exhibited great prowess and the very young ones impressed. Perfect aramandi, neat and clean lines, good angashuddham and good sense of laya as well as very good abhinaya were proof of the Guru's ability and hard work. All the artistes excelled in their roles, but Pavitra swept everybody off their feet with his stellar portrayal of Annamacharya. Spontaneous bursts of applause and a standing ovation at the end proved that Anita Guha had indeed won over the Mumbai audience with her vivid imagination, dazzling choreography and flawless presentation. I would sum it up as a feast fit for the Gods!

### **Talent Promotion Concert of Revathy Kumar 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012**

*Nalini Dinesh*

Revathy began her concert with a rare pada varnam on Lord Ganapati in Mayamalavagowla following it up with *Dinamani vamsha* (Harikambhoji) with kalpana swaras at pallavi. *Ikanaina* in Pushpalatika was rendered with a bright neraval and kalpana swaras at "Karuninchi vega". Poorvikalyani raga was developed well, though the beginning sounded like Pantuvarali because of not showing chatushruti dhaivata. The kriti was Tyagaraja's *Paraloka Sadhaname* with a few kalpana swaras for pallavi. A Khamas kriti of Swati Tirunal *Paalaya Maamayibho* was rendered next. Todi alapana was good using all important phrases. Violinist Shivakumar Anantharaman's Todi was very good reminiscent of his guru T.N. Krishnan's style. G.N. Balasubramaniam's kriti *Mamakuleshwaram* in Roopaka tala was rendered with neraval at "Kamaneeya youvana" one akshara after the beat. The sahitya was beautiful. The tani played for ¼ eduppu was short and good. A good rendering of Tyagaraja's *Shashi vadana* in Chandrajyoti was followed by Keeravani RTP. There were shades of Bhairavi since there was too much oscillation for madhyama and some difficulty in reaching the higher octave in Revathy's alapana. The pallavi was *Shree Krishna gaanam venu gaanam madhura gaanam sabhayorai magizha vaikkum* in tishra jati Ata tala. Triklam and tishram were neatly done. The ragamalika swaras were in Behag, Athana and Manirangu. The reverse swaras were rendered well. *Yaake nirdaya*, the Purandaradasa kriti set as a ragamalika and Poochi Shreenivasa Iyengar's Poornachandrika tillana concluded the concert.

### **Centenary Celebration of Brindamma 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

*Nalini Dinesh*



(l to r) Soundaram (son of T.Brinda), Kalyani Sharma, Alamelu Mani, Jamuna Soundaram (daughter-in-law of T. Brinda), Chitravina N. Ravikiran, Sabha President V. Shankar, Spencer Venugopal, Sabha Vice-President Santhosh Rajan

The birth centenary celebration of an extraordinary musician of the last century whose music was and is still considered as the aesthetic pinnacle began with excerpts from the film "Brindamma -

Music Beyond Music" produced by R.K. Ramanathan with creative direction by S.B. Kanthan. The film was an aural treat with one delectable rendition after another of Brinda (and her sister T. Muktha). The visuals were pleasant too. It was interesting to listen to various artistes' (including T.M. Krishna, Aruna Sairam, Chitravina N. Ravikiran, Geetha Raja, Dr. S. Sowmya among others) take on the magic of Brindamma's music.

After the film, President V. Shankar welcomed the gathering, expressing the regard, reverence and gratitude with which the Sabha thanks great personalities such as Brindamma (and all the others whose centenaries have been commemorated by the Sabha over the past years) for their immense contributions. Apart from the family members of Brindamma, including Shree Soundaram and Smt. Jamuna Soundaram, son and daughter-in-law of T. Brinda who were felicitated on the occasion, the other special guest of honour was Spencer Venugopal, contemporary composer.

Shree Venugopal spoke on the occasion, trying to unravel the secret of the magic of Brindamma's music. Extending Aldous Huxley's saying that after silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music, he stated that music is the best celebration of silence through the medium of sound, and this, would capture the essence of Brindamma's music. She had the sagacity to blend the Naina Pillai and Dhanammal schools, possessed an awesome repertoire, made frugal and optimal use of her voice and demonstrated that grammar is the hand maid of aesthetics. An interesting and very accurate observation made by Shree Venugopal was that she drew swaras from the raga and not the reverse, hers was not a dexterous craft; it was sublime and spontaneous. By listening to her music, we visualize an ideal and not an idea; we witness and share an experience and not an experiment. She was a matchless musician and tenacious crusader for her musical values.

Chitravina Ravikiran's lec-dem on Brindamma's music was next on the agenda. He began by remarking on her intensity of conviction regarding her musical values and her strength of character in being able to follow through on her conviction. Beginning his tutelage under Brindamma at eighteen, Ravikiran had learnt many exquisite pieces from her; for T. Brinda's family, the source of these pieces was either the composers themselves or direct descendants of the composers.



(l to r) K.V. Prasad (mridangam), Chitravina N. Ravikiran, Apoorna Ravindran (vocal support), Akkarai S. Subhalakshmi (violin)

Speaking about her bani, he stated that the impact of her bani could be seen on so many musicians. To understand the bani: voice culture starts with mind culture (gnanam). Brindamma had no insecurity on any swara, landing from higher to lower note with ease and elegance



(Ravikiran demonstrated with a snippet from Brindamma's Shankarabharanam alapana). Often music is both science and art. Brindamma's music was very suggestive and introverted. There was purity and clarity of tone not just in the voice but also in the mind (Ravikiran demonstrates with Brindamma's rendition of the Punnagavaraali composition *Ninnu Joochi*). The next demo snippet was from the Balahamsa kriti *Parulannu*, the crisp, sharp and weighty phrases of which had first stirred Ravikiran and inspired him to learn from Brindamma. Brindamma's tireless pursuit of aesthetics was demonstrated by a recording of the Kalyani kriti *Kantimati*. Ravikiran pointed out an interesting usage in the Bhairavi padam, an oscillation from shuddha dhaivatam to upper shadjam, which may not be grammatically correct, but aesthetically delightful. Ravikiran then sang a sangati in the Sahana padam *Moratopu* to demonstrate the contrast between Brindamma's singing in the lower notes and the higher notes. There is amazing restraint (i.e. no screaming) and endurance of voice in the higher notes; it is more challenging to achieve restraint in the higher notes. There is ghanam in her lower octave singing and tulyam in her higher octave singing. Ravikiran then played a rendition of the kriti *Ilalo* to illustrate that Brindamma was equally at ease in rendering fast kritis.

Ravikiran pointed out other distinctive features of Brindamma's bani like her singing of *Samaja vara gamana* in raga Varamu instead of the usual Hindolam, singing of *Mokshamu galada* with chatushruti dhaivatam, singing of Andhali kriti *Brihannayaki* with sadharana gandharam instead of antara gandharam as in the usual interpretation of Andhali as a janya of Harikambhoji and a Todi touch (involving kaishiki nishadam) in her rendition of Saveri. He next demonstrated the anupallavi of the Varaali padam *Valapudasa* to illustrate the fact that Brindamma wouldn't sing something just because she could; she used to sing a much slower version of a sangati in the said composition rather than a faster version in order to live up to the high aesthetic values ingrained in her. Even at 80 she wouldn't modify any sangatis.

The evening ended with a short recital by T. Brinda's disciples in Mumbai Alamelu Mani and Kalyani Sharma consisting of the Begada padam *Yaalapadare*, *Ninnu joochi* (Punnagavaraali), Behag javali *Samayamide* and Yadhukula Kambhoji tillana.

K.V. Prasad and Akkarai S. Subhalakshmi accompanied Ravikiran as well as Alamelu Mani and Kalyani Sharma on the mridangam and violin respectively. Apoorva Ravindran gave vocal support to Ravikiran.

### ***Dance Festival by Shankarananda Kalakshetra 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012***

*Nalini Dinesh*

#### **Tyagaraja Ramayanam**



◀ *Ananda Shankar's solo act 'Tyagaraja Ramayanam'*

Ananda Shankar Jayant, who spearheads the Hyderabad-based Shankarananda Kalakshetra, presented a solo (Ekaharya) dance act on the first day of the festival. The theme was Tyagaraja Ramayanam based on the work of the same name by V. Seshadri. Tyagaraja kritis were interspersed with verses from the Valmiki Ramayana tuned by Ananda's late mother Subhashini Shankar.

Opening with a shloka *Raghavam Dasharataatmaja* set to Naattai raga and an energetic pushpanjali, the birth of Rama was depicted using verses from the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Valmiki Ramayana Bala Kanda, *Atascha Dwashe Maase*. The beauty of young Rama was depicted with Tyagaraja's Kannadagowla kriti *Sogasujooda*. Vocalist Satyaraja Venumadhav's rendition of this kriti (as well as the others in the entire act) made the sahitya crystal-clear with proper splitting of words – a good learning for non-Telugu musicians who are used to hearing and rendering the lyrics in a particular manner which may not bring out clearly the correct meaning of the lyrics.

Ananda depicted feeding and putting to sleep of baby Rama using *Uyyaalaloo gavayya* (Neelambari). Her hurried movements in this part were such that Kausalya seemed to tire of swinging the cradle too soon! The entry of Vishwamitra and slaying of the demons disturbing his yagna by Rama and Lakshmana was depicted by Valmiki verses (*Taam apadanti*). The depiction of Ravana's attempt to lift Shiva's bow in the swayamvara scene was good. *Alagalella*, Tyagaraja's Madhyamavati kriti described the moments before the wedding sequence *Iyam Seeta Mama Suta* and *Pavanaja Stuti Paatra*. Ananda's depiction of the reaction of Seeta when she comes to know about Rama's success and the romantic interlude after the wedding (Dhanyasi kriti *Ramaabhirama* -"Bangaaru Meti Paanpupai" – "you Rama, seated on a golden dais, are being worshipped by that jewel among women Seeta with various kinds of fragrant flowers...."), lacked dignity.

Rama leaving for the forest and the worship of his paadukas by Bharata was portrayed using Ramapriya kriti *Sandehamunu Teerpavayya*. One was puzzled by the exaggeration and excess energy that infested the depiction of sahitya that is usually meant for repose – for instance, for the word Tyagaraja in "Bharata archanache Paadukalu Dharani Ninnosange Tyagaraja Bhaagyama" – "By worshipping your sandals, Bharata secured thy self for the world, O great fortune of Tyagaraja". The excess-energy syndrome besieged the singing also – the volume was quite unbearable especially in the Vaali -slaying episode. The exaggeration was however quite suitable for Soorpanakha in the following episode. Ananda's body language was apt for Shabari welcoming Rama and serving him (*Enta Ninne*). The Vali-slaying episode was interpreted using the popular kriti *Marugelara* ("O Raghava, where is the need to conceal yourself? The universe itself is your form with the sun and moon as your eyes"). Hanuman crossing the ocean was depicted with *Aparama Bhakti*, the Ravana war scene with *Sarasa saama daana* and finally Rama pattabhishekam with the Valmiki verse *Vaidehi sahitam suradrumatale*.

Apart from the vocalist, the orchestra consisted of Sneha Magapu (nattuvangam), Kolanka Sai Kumar (violin) and T.P. Balu (mridangam).

## Nrityopahara



A scene from 'Nrityopahara'

The second day of the festival witnessed group choreographies beginning with Surya Namaskar. Jayadeva's *Pralaya Payodhi Jale* from his Geeta Govindam was the basis for the Dashavatara episode in which the avatars depicted Matsya, Koorma, Varaaha, Vaamana, Narasimha, Parashurama, Rama, Balarama, Buddha and Kalki. A solo by Ananda followed – an excerpt from one of her earlier works Shringara Darpanam - a shloka *Hiranya varnaam Harineem* followed by the Annamacharya kriti *Alarulu Guriyaka* (Shankarabharanam). Another Annamacharya kriti in the shringara-bhakti mode followed, *Rammanave Vaani rammanave* (Desh). The next episode was from another earlier work of Ananda – *India in Spring India Inspiring* which had been commissioned for the U.N. Biodiversity meet in Hyderabad. It was based on the poetry of Devulappalli Krishna Shastri. All the usual symbols of spring were depicted with verve by Ananda's disciples. While depiction of bees, flowers, deer and peacocks are commonly seen, some interesting imagery was seen in the depiction of trees and creepers by the members as a group. The ragas used were Vasanta, Behag and Gambheera Nattai – the last was used in a mallaari to depict snakes. The depiction of swans, peacocks and other birds was also very innovative. Sadly, the reality is less than inspiring - polluted rivers, garbage mounds and vehicular exhaust are the present-day symbols rather than the ones portrayed in *India in Spring India Inspiring*.

A Meera bhajan *Tum bin More* set to Mishra Malkauns was performed by Ananda. Exaggeration again reared its head in this piece- why was Krishna's expression so furious while granting Draupadi the reams of sari? A Natabhairavi tillana dedicated to Ananda's guru Rukmini Devi Arundale composed by Veena Krishnamachari was performed by the group. Intricate footwork, innovative adavus and formations marked the group choreography, though perfection needs to be achieved in these as well as in stage positioning. Shivoham was the concluding item with Janakaraj and Aparna Sharma depicting Shiva-Parvati with beautiful friezes. Again here, though Janakaraj's leaps and bounds spoke of his wonderful training, it was altogether too much of a good thing and was exhausting to watch.

The other members of the troupe were Sneha Magapu, Aditi Rao, Krithika Varsha, and Chelana Galada.

### **Concert of Mysore Nagaraj and Dr. Manjunath 8<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

Nalini Dinesh



(l to r) Tiruvarur Bhaktavatsalam (mridangam), Mysore Nagaraj (violin),  
Dr. Manjunath (violin), Giridhar Udupa (ghatam)

Nagaraj and Manjunath's was a violin concert marked by virtuosity and sensitivity with memorable percussive support by Tiruvarur Bhaktavatsalam and Giridhar Udupa. *Maamava Sada Janani*

was the opening item preceded by a short and sweet sketch of Kaanada by Dr. Manjunath. Nagaraj elaborated Asaveri before *Ra ra ma inti Daaka*. Kalpana swaras and korvai were very good. One felt there was an unnecessary element of Mohanakalyani in the Vachaspati alapana by Dr. Manjunath. A brisk rendition of *Paraatparaa* with excellent kalpana swaras followed. Dhanyasi kriti *Sangeeta Gnanamu* was the filler before a leisurely exploration of the main raga Kambhoji by both brothers in turn. All the facets of the raga were brought out in detail. *Maragatavalleem* was played with neraval and kalpana swaras in 2 kalas at "Kroora daityadi". The tani avartanam was in tishra nadai completely; there was a kuraippu section that was also in tishra nadai and wonderful korvai to conclude.

*Jyothi Mohan is a Bharatanatyam guru and faculty member of the Vidyalaya*

## OBITUARY



*Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma*

Eminent Kuchipudi dancer Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma breathed his last on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012, following an illness. He was 77.

Sarma, a famous male exponent of female roles in the Kuchipudi dance tradition, was known for his portrayal of Satyabhama and Usha. His grace and delectable abhinaya never let the audience suspect it was a man playing the role of the heroine.

Born in Kuchipudi village of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh on 9th September, 1935, Sarma learned Kuchipudi dance from his own family members at the early age of five and started his career as a stage artiste from the age of 12. He was considered a child prodigy. He began playing the role of Prahlada in dramas staged during Navaratri celebrations. He later specialised in portraying female roles. He also learnt classical music from Sishtu Brahmayya and later perfected it under the tutelage of Eleswarapu Sitaramanjaneyulu. Chinta Krishnamurthy trained him in Yakshagana. He learned Bharatam from Lakshminarayana Sastry. He studied all the kalapas. He soon became famous for the roles of Satyabhama, Usha, Devadevi and Vishwa Mohini. He also acted in a few Telugu films as a dancer.

He established the Kuchipudi Kalakshetra. He was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship in 1961, Padma Shri in 1970 and Kalidas Samman in 1981.

The last rites were performed at his native village Kuchipudi with state honour. The classical dance world will miss this legendary dancer who did a lot for Kuchipudi. Kuchipudi has lost two luminaries in quick succession - Guru Vempati Chinna Satyam and Guru Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma.

## Happenings at the Vidyalaya

Nalini Dinesh

### Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkande Day 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2012



(l to r) Milind Joshi (tabla), Suresh Degwekar (Hindustani vocal), Vinay Dalvi (harmonium)

The evening began with a Hindustani recital by Vidyalaya faculty members Suresh Degwekar (vocal), accompanied on the tabla by Milind Joshi and harmonium by Vinay Dalvi. The opening raga was Kedar. He sang a vilambit khyal *Jogi rawala* and drut khyal *Kanha re Nanda Nandana* which used to be sung by D.V. Paluskar. The sargam for the khyal exposition had good combinations of swaras. The vocalist's open-throated singing with feeling made for absorbing listening. The second composition was in raga *Desh Piya kar dhar dekho*, a bandish sung by the shishya parampara of V.N. Bhatkande including Master Krishnarao Phulambrikar and Pandit Ram Marathe.

**A musical docudrama Golden Age Of Classical Music (1850 -1950)** with research, screen play and direction by Anjali Kirtane was screened on the occasion.



Anjali Kirtane & Mr. Kirtane

The film starts with Dhrupad Gayan, Dhrupad Dhamar being the oldest form of Hindustani music. An elderly singer presents raga Darbari in a palace. A man and a woman wearing the traditional Marathi costume and standing against the backdrop of a beautiful, lighted house, welcome the audience. They are the narrators of this film, providing important historical details and throwing light on happenings in the Golden Age of Music.

Then the two narrators take the audience into the realms of Gharana music, showing how various Gharanas or schools of musical thought, having their own unique singing styles, came into existence. The film depicts migration of the northern musical Gharanas such as Gwalior, Kirana, Jaipur and Agra to Maharashtra. Stalwarts of these Gharanas like Ustad Rahimat Khan of Gwalior Gharana, Abdul Kareem Khan of Kirana Gharana, Ustad Alladiyan Khan of Jaipur Gharana and Natthan Khan of Agra Gharana, firmly rooted their musical traditions in the new land.

The film also depicts symbolically the story of struggle of Maharashtra youths of that era like Pt. Balkrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjkar, Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze and Bhaskarbuwa Bakhale who migrated to their respective Gurus' place to learn this beautiful art of singing. Life in the gurukuls was full of hardships. There they had to perform all sorts of household duties in spite of their tender ages. With great difficulty they could please their Gurus and acquire the Art. After finishing their study, these young Pundits returned to Maharashtra and developed their own shishya paramparas.

The film also respectfully takes note of the contribution of Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, two revolutionary Mahapurushas who changed the future of this great art. With their modern outlook they evolved a new educational system. They founded new teaching institutes to impart knowledge so that students did not have to depend on the whims and moods of their Gurus. They developed curriculums, wrote books, formulated a notation system.

On the 5th May 1901, Vishnu Digambar founded the Gandharva Maha Vidyalay at Lahore, which was the first of its kind. Having developed a notation system, he wrote books on music. To print them, he opened a printing press. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande founded music schools at Baroda, Gwalior and Lucknow.

This was the beginning of a new era of enlightenment. Being a grammarian of music, Bhatkhande sought the science behind the art. He was called the Panini of Music. For common people, the experience of classical music was not as easy as it is today. It was an art meant for Raja - Maharajas and their wealthy Sardars. But the duo-Vishnus took the art from its ivory tower to the commoners by organizing music festivals for them. Propagation of music was their most cherished goal.

In this film, artistes of different Gharanas have played roles of various singers. Ustad Raja Miyan of Agra Gharana, Pt. Chandrashekhar Vaze of Kirana Gharana and Vidushi Shruti Sadolikar of Jaipur Gharana present their special Gharana music. Vidushi Rajashree Pathak has sung two beautiful Thumris to establish the Thumri Parampara.

In this Golden Age, confluence of various Gharanas was conspicuous in some artistes like Gajananrao Joshi, Bhaskarbuwa Bakhle and Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze. They mastered the Gayakis of different Gharanas and created their own styles. Alladia Khan used to say "Uttar paida karti hain, magar Dakkhan dad deti hain" – "But in this era the south also produced many great singers who evoked thumping response".

Marathi Sangeet Natak was instrumental in spreading classical music in various strata of society. Music veterans realised that Natak could be used as an attractive means of dissemination of classical music. Hence maestros like Bhaskarbuwa Bakhle, Govindrao Tembe, Master Krishnrao Phulambrikar and Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze directed musical plays. Due to well-cultivated voices of actor-singers, their mastery over laya-tal and due to the music direction of veterans, classical music reached the four corners of Maharashtra. People became familiar with various ragas like Kafi, Khamaj, Pilu and Bheempalas. Many acquired the skill of recognizing ragas from Natya Geets. Thus over a period of time, the dream of the duo-Vishnus was realised.

The young torch-bearers of this Golden Age were artistes like, Pt. Ram Marathe, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Vidushi Gangubai Hangal, Dr.Vasantrao Deshpande, Pt. Kumar Gandharva and Pt. D.V.Paluskar. The film ends with the youthful and lovely singing of these new representatives of Golden Age.



*A still from the film 'Golden Age of Classical Music (1850- 1950)'*

Being a docudrama, the film is an amalgamation of documentary, feature film as well as drama. As in the documentary style, narrators tell the story of Golden Age. To establish certain points a few interviews are added. The theme is also expressed through rare photographs and voices of great singers of that period.

But at the same time, some scenes are enacted as in feature film or drama. Dr. Ram Deshpande plays the role of Balkrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjekar, Master Sangram Samel is Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. The depiction of old Gurukul System, dramatic events in the life of Gayanacharya Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, Baba Harivallabh Music Festival of Jalandhar, which is the oldest music festival in India and the colourful representation of the Golden Age of Marathi Sangeet Natak are the unique features of this docudrama.

**Saraswati Pooja 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2012**



*Musical Instruments kept in pooja at the Vidyalaya*



*(l to r) Prasanna Kumar (mridangam), Hemamalini Arun, Bharathi Nagaraj, Sunita Ganesh, Mahathi Nagaraj, Prema Sundaresan (violin)*

Saraswati pooja was celebrated at the Vidyalaya with a pooja, followed by a recital of Devi kritis by Hemamalini Arun, Bharathi Nagaraj, Sunita Ganesh and Mahathi Nagaraj, all disciples of Smt. Kalyani Sharma. Prema Sundaresan and Prasanna Kumar accompanied the group on the violin and mridangam respectively. Bharathi Nagaraj sang an invocatory shloka *Vakratunda mahakaya* in Naattai. Four of the five Tiruvaiyaru Pancharatna kritis on Goddess Dharmasamvardhani were rendered, namely, *Amma Dharmasamvardhani* (Athana), *Neevu brova* (Saveri), *Bale balendu bhooshani* (Reetigowla) and *Karunajoodavamma* (Todi). Each of the Tiruvaiyaru Pancharatna kritis was preceded by a shloka rendered solo by each of the singers in the respective ragas. These were followed by the first-day Navaratri kriti of Swati Tirunal *Devi Jagajjanani* (Shankarabharanam) and Muthuswamy Dikshitar's 9<sup>th</sup> Kamalamba Navaavarana kriti *Shree Kamalaambaam jayati* (Ahiri). Finally, *Mucchata Brahmaadulaku*, a Tyagaraja kriti on Lord Panchanadeeshwara in Madhyamavati was sung as a mangalam. The kriti were rendered with evocative bhava and good co-ordination in voices and sangatis.

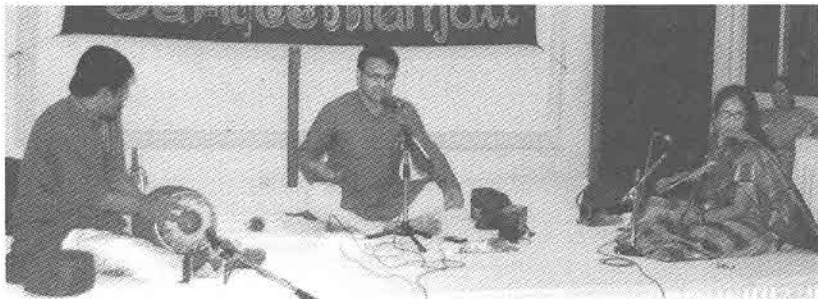
On Vijayadashami day (24th October 2012), students and staff of the Vidyalaya rendered sarali, jantai, alankaram, Malahari and Mohanam geetams and *Shree Saraswati* (composed by Muthuswamy Dikshitar in Arabhi raga). Admission of new students and teaching new lessons for students was a part of Vidyarambham.

#### ***Muthuswami Dikshitar Day 20<sup>th</sup> November 2012***



(l to r) S. Gopakumar (mridangam), Samyukta Venkatraman, Sharada Murali (violin)

Samyukta began with a neat rendition of *Siddhi Vinayakam* (Shanmukhapriya) followed by *Shree Matrubhootam* (Kannada). A brief Dhaamavati alapana prefaced *Parandhaamavati*, followed by Bhairavi alapana before *Balagopalam*. The rendition of *Ramachandram Bhavayami* (Vasanta) would have sounded better if the kalapramanam had been stepped up. Surati raga bhava was brought out well by the singer in the concluding item *Shree Venkatagireesham*. Samyukta has a powerful voice, well-aligned to shruti and her rendition is characterized by azhutham and pathantara shuddham.



(l to r) S. Gopakumar (mridangam), Subramanian Chidambaram, Sharada Murali (violin)



Subramanian's opening item was *Vallabha Nayakasya* (Begada) followed by *Kanchadelayatakshi* (Kamala Manohari). Lalita raga alapana was good, both by vocalist and violinist, the kriti was *Hiranmayeem Lakshmeem*. The following raga Andhali is an interesting mix of Darbar, Shree and Kaanada, the kriti was *Brihannayaki*. *Maamava Meenakshi* (Varaali), *Parvati Kumaram Bhaavaye* (Natakuranji) and *Chetashree* (Dwijavanti) concluded the recital. Subramanian's sangatis, especially the fast ones, lacked clarity and the Varaali alapana needed refinement.

The youngsters were fortunate to have very good accompaniment provided by seasoned artistes Sharada Murali on the violin and S. Gopakumar on the mridangam which enlivened their recitals to a great extent.

### **S. Seshadri Memorial Talent Exposure Concert 23rd November 2012**



(l to r) Vidya M, Jayam Jayaram & Sudha Mani (veena)

The trio on veena Jayam Jayaram, Sudha Mani and Vidya M, began the programme with Vasanta varnam in two speeds followed by the sprightly Tyagaraja kriti in Kuntalavaraali *Shara Shara Samare* and two Dikshitar kritis *Kamakshi* (Bilahari) and *Kanchadelayatakshi* (Kamala Manohari). Vidya played a Kalyani alapana before *Biraana varaalicchi* followed by a brief Hindolam sketch by Jayam. There was some difficulty in maintaining the shruti of Sudha's veena due to which there was a time delay. So the programme had to be wrapped up in a hurry, the concluding item being a rare swarajati in Mohanam after Sudha Mani's sketch of the raga. The sound of the trio's playing was sweet. However, the renditions were rather flat, thus failing to leverage the inherent capacity of the veena for gamakas.



Kalyankumar S. Kashinarayanan (mridangam), Pranav Ganapathy (vocal), Chyndhri Padmanabhan(violin)

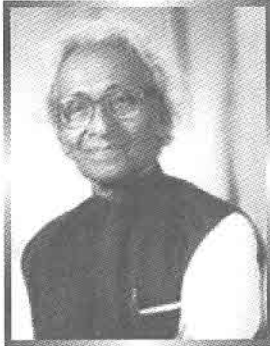
Pranav's concert which followed had the capacity to establish instant communication with the listener right from the opening Shree raga varnam. Though not blessed with a conventionally

good voice and having a discernible problem with enunciation, his singing had bhava and the voice has the facility to handle fast and podi sangatis. Hard work was also evident in his commendable neraval and swara prastara for the main item in Shankarabharanam *Brihadeeshwaraya*. He had picked a beautiful line for elaboration "Charu Chandrashekharaya varaaya charu smita saraseeruha padaaya". The Shankarabharanam alapana was a very good effort, though some parts needed refinement. His grasp of laya is good in general except that, curiously, he tends to slow down the pace in the closing aksharas of the tala cycle.

*Gananathane* (Saranga) had some phrases in a lighter mould while the rendition of *Deva deva* (Mayamalavagowla) had hints of Saveri. The Dwaadasha Ranjanimala (composer : N.S. Chidambaram) was rendered well with the different ragas coming through clearly – Ranjani, Shreeranjani, Guharanjani, Shivaranjani, Janaranjani, Mararanjani, Manoranjani, Megharanjani, Shrutiranjani, Swarananjani, Budharanjani and Chittharanjani. The concluding item was a Tiruppugazh *Oruvarai oruvar* set to raga Hindolam.

Chyndhri Padmanabhan and Kalyankumar S. Kashinarayanan provided good support on the violin and mridangam respectively.

## OBITUARY



*Acharya Parvati Kumar*

The dance world has lost three eminent Gurus in the last quarter of 2012. After Kuchipudi maestros Vempati Chinna Satyam and Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma, we have now lost Bharatanatyam Guru Acharya Parvati Kumar of Mumbai who breathed his last on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012 in Mumbai. He was 94.

Between the years 1947 and 1965, he choreographed over twenty dance dramas. Rhythm of Culture, Dekh Teri Bamba, Discovery of India, and Krishna Leela, were among the most popular and critically acclaimed. He choreographed dance dramas such as Panchatantra and Snow White and Seven Dwarfs for children. He also choreographed several sequences for films. The success he met with in these endeavours prompted him to establish the Tanjavur Nrityashala in 1968 to train students in Bharatanatyam. He simultaneously spent years in researching Marathi Nirupanas (complete repertoires) composed by Sarfoji Maharaj Bhonsle, the ruler of Tanjavur. This resulted in the publication of his Tanjavur Nritya Prabandha by the Maharashtra Sahitya and Sanskriti Mandal. These nirupanas, or repertoires, which he researched were also choreographed by him in dance form and presented on stage. For his contribution to Indian dance, Acharya Parvati Kumar was honoured with several awards from the Government of Maharashtra, the F.I.E. Foundation, the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the Sahitya Sangh Mandir, Bombay Sursingar Samsad among others. He had served on various committees constituted by the Education Department of the Central Government and the Sangeet Natak Akademi. He leaves behind several distinguished disciples to carry on his legacy.

## OBITUARY



Madurai T. Srinivasan

Versatile musician Madurai T. Srinivasan passed away in Chennai on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2012. He was 80.

Trained in mridangam and Carnatic vocal by Chozhavandan Sessa Iyengar and beginning his career as an accompanying artiste for kutcheries, he then digressed into movies and built a highly successful career, playing for five generations of film music directors including G. Ramanathan, K.V. Mahadevan, M.S. Viswanathan, Ilaiyaraaja and A.R. Rahman. *Paattum Naane Bhavamum Naane*, (Thiruvilaiyadal), *Marainthirunthu Parkum Marmam enna* (Thillana Mohanambal), songs from Salangai Oli, Mridanga Chakravarti, Alaigal Oyvathillai, Ilaiyaraaja's celebrated album 'How to Name it', are just a few examples of his masterly percussive support.

Srinivasan has also composed varnams, kritis, tillanas, and alarippus and jatiswarams for dance. His popular composition, *Karunai Deivame* in Sindhubhairavi raga, is considered his masterpiece.

Madurai T. Srinivasan was the recipient of a number of awards including the Kalaimamani awarded by the Government of Tamil Nadu and the "Vaggeyakarar" award conferred by the Music Academy, Chennai.

## OBITUARY



N. C. Soundaravalli

Noted Carnatic vocalist, N. C. Soundaravalli passed away in Chennai on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2012 after a brief illness. She was 76.

Trained under illustrious gurus such as Palghat Harihara Iyer and later, Maharajapuram Santhanam, N.C. Soundaravalli specialised in devotional music releasing successful albums featuring several shlokas including the Parthasarathy Suprabhatam, Rajarajeshwarai Suprabhatam and Karumari Amman Suprabhatam.

Ms. Soundaravalli is a recipient of several honours including the Kalaimamani title awarded by the Tamil Nadu government.



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